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GAME OF THRONES

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metroNEWS

Taxi drivers attacked over decal

CAMPAIGN

Man picks a fight over symbol in sign language

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Several Calgary cab drivers had a close call with an agitated citizen Monday after he approached a group of drivers at a downtown hotel taxi stand, ready for a fight.

Driver Samson Kevede was sitting in line at the Hyatt taxi stand in Calgary's core. He wasn't sure what was going on when a large man, who he said appeared out of nowhere, began yelling about the black-and-white decal on the side of his cab.

"He was ready to punch my face and he told me, he said, 'Want to fight with me?'"

The man was upset about the symbol on the decal, a hand raised with the American Sign Language gesture for love, also commonly seen as the symbol for "rock on," he dubbed as a symbol of the devil, yelling it was evil.

In June, Checker Yellow Cabs partnered with HomeFront, a non-profit organization that helps families escape domestic violence, to sport the sign on their cars as a way to raise awareness.

"That sign is 'I love you' … it's not a bad thing, but the guy was so angry about it," said Kevede.

He said he was lucky, climbing back into his car before any violence ensued, but added that other cab drivers in the same line were also verbally and physically threatened before police arrived on scene.

HomeFront executive director, Maggie MacKillop, said this is one of the first negative responses they've had to the campaign.

"When you put yourself out there in the public, people are entitled to their own opinions and thoughts," she said.

"It takes a community to end domestic violence. The symbol itself means 'I love you' in American Sign Language and the symbol itself is really to just say there's a community out there that supports you."

Layna Segall, social media manager of The Checker Transportation Group, said although there have been some misunderstandings about the campaign, there have also been many positives.

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Donations pouring in for Syrian refugee family in city

CHARITY

Neighbour spreads word of need through social media

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Through social media, a community has come together to help a family of Syrian refugees in dire need.

"They basically came with their shirts on their backs. They had absolutely nothing," said the family's neighbour, Sherilyn Clark.

Hanan and Majed, who requested to not share their last names, arrived in Canada in 2014 with their four children.

Since then, Hanan, who is trained in cutting hair, has struggled to obtain more than temporary work. His wife, Majed, is unable to work.

Just two weeks ago, Majed reached out to Clark, who lives just down from their northwest Calgary home, and asked for help. Clark had only just met the family but was happy to provide assistance.

Since then, Clark has donated a vehicle and other items, and put out a call on social media asking for donations for the family.

Majed escaped Syria with her family and nothing but the clothes on her back. After settling in Calgary, she wasn't prepared for the kindness of the community. AARON CHATHA/METRO

More than 50 people responded, offering clothing, food, toys, school supplies, winter jackets, books, linens, furniture and a multitude of items the family was without. The only items they were hesitant to accept were cash donations.

The family, who escaped Syria to provide a safer place for their children to grow up, were overwhelmed by the community's kindness, and the stark difference from their homeland.

"It was so different. Like, (in Syria) there were different rules for girls and boys. People, they hate each other there, they just want to kill," said Majed's daughter, speaking and translating for her mother.

"We came here and found the difference was so big. Here was love. All people love each other. In my country, we didn't see that so much. There were only people who want to kill one another."

The family of six first lived in a one-room basement, which was very cramped. They moved into a slightly larger unit, but Hanan has been unable to secure even temporary work now.

Majed's daughter, who is in junior high, wants to help with the family finances.

"My mom, she can't work, but I'm thinking when I turn 15, I'm going to find work and help out."

Ultimately, she hopes to become a singer. She's planning on joining the choir club when she begins this year.

She said her father's biggest obstacle in finding employment is the language barrier, as he only speaks Arabic.

They are hoping someone in the Calgary Arabic community will be able to help find him a permanent job, in any position.

HOW TO HELP

The family is still in need of several items, including a working laptop for the children who begin school in September, comforters and small household items.

Most importantly, they are hoping someone will be able to find their father, Hanan, employment in a position where he can speak Arabic or English fluency is not required.

To get in contact with the family, email their neighbour Sherilyn Clark at sherilyn_c@yahoo.ca.

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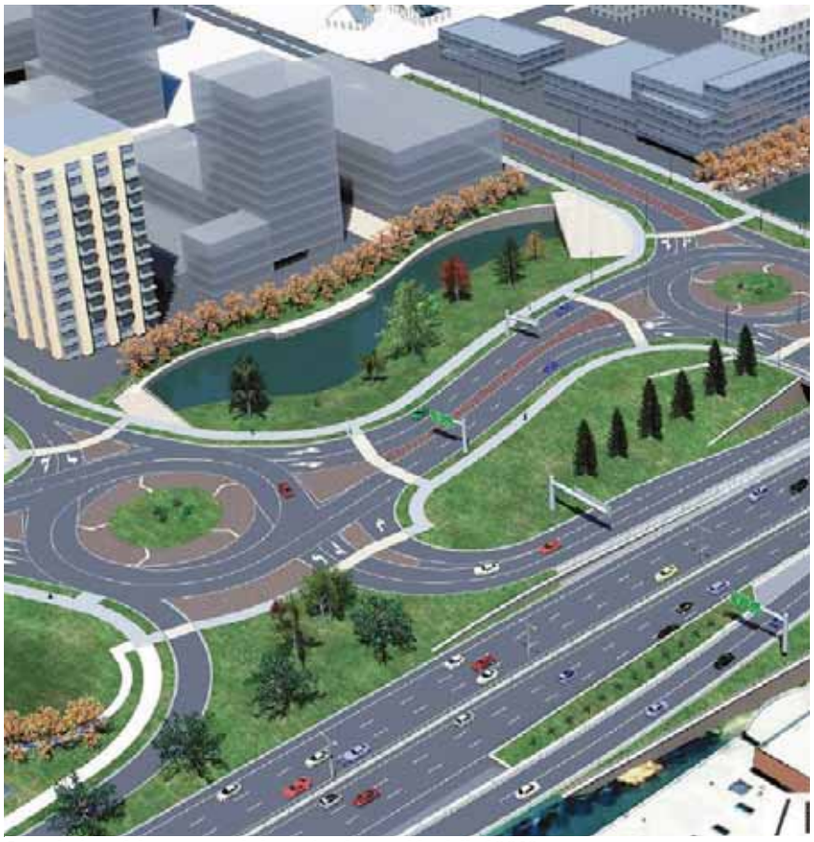

A rendering of the proposed plan going forward for fall of 2016. COURTESY CITY OF CALGARY

Interchange plan is 'confusing people'

FLANDERS STREET

Transportation activists upset they were not consulted

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Pedestrians, cyclists and motorists are shaking their heads in confusion, as plans for the Flanders Street interchange have re-emerged before the city prepares to delve into construction.

A design two years in the making has finally come to fruition, but some Calgary transportation activists are wondering why they weren't consulted on key elements of the project.

With public consultation over, the Canada Lands Company will be hosting a number of information sessions for the community who may have concerns on how construction will impact their commute.

"The current schedule has the new interchange open to traffic in the fall of 2016," said Chris Elkey, senior director of real estate at Canada Lands.

"The interchange itself, and by that I mean more of the softer pieces, the landscaping and those types of pieces will be completed by fall of 2017."

Elkey added that Labour Day weekend, when the old bridge comes down, commuters heading downtown on Crowchild won't have any headaches.

But Kimberley Nelson of Bike Calgary said her group wasn't consulted and had major concerns on the whole concept.

"I don't know if it's going to work for cars, but bikes and pedestrians are the least considered groups out of this entire thing — it's just a nightmare," she said.

Bike Calgary, which normally gets a seat at the table for infrastructure discussions, said it wasn't consulted at all. It even voiced specific concerns in a letter to city staff.

"Roundabouts for cyclists, if there's more than one lane, are just devastating," she said. "I can't even imagine trying to do it in full traffic."

The city has said that cyclists may choose either to use the road, or take to the sidewalk, which is about five metres wide — two metres wider than standard builds — ready to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians.

"You're confusing people. You're telling people it's illegal to ride on the sidewalk — except where we decide not to accommodate you," Nelson said.

PUBLIC INFO

An information session was held Wednesday at The Military Museum's Atrium (4520 Crowchild Trail SW), and another will be held Tuesday, Sept 1 from 6 to 9 p.m.

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LAB SERVICE CANCELLATION

AHS docs highlight potential problems

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

Despite assurances from Health Minister Sarah Hoffman that patients wouldn't notice delays after last week's cancellation of a lab contract with AHS, new documents released by the official opposition suggest otherwise. The documents suggest that Dynalife, the private contractor of lab services, may not have a building to operate out of in just two years.

"The current providers building lease expires in 2017 and the landlord is redeveloping the facility and will not renew," reads an AHS document.

Wildrose health critic Drew Barnes said this fact means it's clear Hoffman's assertion isn't fulsome, as there is a risk that service will be affected.

"Alberta Health Services has been reviewing this for four years, so for the health minister to say she wants to go back to square one doesn't make any sense."

Last week, Hoffman halted an ongoing process that would have turned over much of the lab work for Edmonton and Northern Alberta to Sonic Healthcare, an Australian company that became the preferred bidder.

But Hoffman said the AHS documents don't tell the whole story. "We do need to expand the capacity, but the document doesn't say that the only way to do that is through private delivery — and I think it is important we take our time."

The documents also detail the ongoing difficulty in attracting lab workers to deal with a rising demand for more complex cases and the suggestion that the only way to deal with the demand is a large automated lab.

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The landing page of AshleyMadison.com, which advises: "Life is short. Have an affair." Hackers stole user data weeks ago and posted it online Wednesday. SCREENSHOT

Leak reveals work emails

PRIVACY

Multiple online personas a good idea, security expert advises

Robson Fletcher
Metro | Calgary

Dozens of Alberta government, City of Calgary, and City of Edmonton email addresses were among the hacked user data from AshleyMadison.com, a dating website that encourages extra-marital affairs, that was posted online Wednesday.

A search through the tens of millions of email addresses used to create AshleyMadison accounts revealed 69 instances of @gov.ab.ca, the email suffix of many provincial employees.

There were another 14 instances of @albertahealthservices.ca, but no instances of @assembly.ab.ca, the address assigned to MLAs, political staff, and some non-partisan legislature staff.

Creating an initial AshleyMadison account doesn't require email verification, and indeed some of the addresses with government suffixes appear to have obvious fake names, but many seem to correspond to real people, whom Metro won't identify specifically.

Some municipal government employees also appeared to use their work email accounts to register on the site: Among the data were 32 instances of @calgary.ca and 23 instances of @edmonton.ca.

"It's not the brightest thing in the world to use your work address if you're doing something that you don't want people to know about," said Tom Keenan, an information security expert and professor of digital design at the University of Calgary.

Increasingly, Keenan said, people need to be aware that all the information they put online comes with some degree of risk.

"Trust no one," he said. "There's always a chance something's going to get hacked and get out there."

Outside of things like online banking and tax returns that require real personal information, Keenan advises maintaining "another identity that doesn't link back to you" for other types of online activity. Many online purchases can be done with prepaid credit cards and false names, he noted.

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Calgary students develop smart cane for the blind

MAKER-THON

First-ever city event fosters innovative thinking for young learners

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Team Enova is working to create a collision-detecting walking stick for Gloria Rubio (second from left). AARON CHATHA/METRO

Gloria Rubio once worked on airplanes, designing seats to make room for more cargo space.

This was in Mexico.

Now, she lives in Calgary and works with the Independent Living Resource Centre to try and help people like her, who have a disability.

Rubio is legally blind.

"I'm able to see, but sometimes, my eyes, they get unstable," she said. "When my eyes are better I can walk, slowly, without a cane. But when they get more inflamed, then I need my cane to know where the stairs are."

Now Rubio is getting some assistance herself from team Enova Calgary as part of the first-ever Tikkun Olam Maker-thon to be held in Calgary.

The event, which has been held worldwide, pairs new-graduates and students still in school with people who have disabilities.

Teams have a few weeks to get to know the problems of the person they're paired with. The goal is to come up with a project to help the person.

In Rubio's case, she has presented a choice of two challenges to team Enova. One is to create an auto-focusing device to help her read. The other challenge, which the team feels more confident in delivering, is a collision-detecting walking stick.

She's hoping for a small device that attaches to walking sticks, that detects four levels of height: floor, knees, waist and eye level.

A lucky coincidence for the team, they'd already begun working on a similar device in school last year, which they hope they can adapt to work with the cane.

But most important to Rubio, is that the device is simple and affordable.

"She mentioned having the device that we design being made available for people even in third-world countries, so she wanted a more simple design," said Nicole Belanger, part of team Enova Calgary. "That immediately triggered something in me because I'm in energy and environment. I'm focused on making things more efficient and sustainable."

> **I'm focused on making things more efficient and sustainable.**
> Nicole Belanger, team Enova

Enova Calgary is just one of the teams that will attempt to turn their designs into reality at the maker-thon on Sept. 11, 12 and 13 at the Telus Spark Centre.

IN BRIEF

Woman dead following fatal crash west of city

One woman is dead after a vehicle and a semi-truck collided on Highway 8 and Range Road 31 early Wednesday morning.

Another man, believed to be in his twenties, was taken to the Foothills Medical Centre with minor injuries.

Cochrane RCMP and EMS responded to the crash just after 1 a.m., Wednesday.

RCMP said it found the eastbound semi's tanker empty and the driver in the vehicle. The west-bound driver of the other vehicle was also found in her car.

After inspecting at the scene, RCMP said the car crossed the centre line of the highway hitting the semi head-on. METRO

Residents flee after carbon monoxide scare

A 17-floor apartment building in the city's southwest was evacuated Wednesday afternoon due to elevated Carbon Monoxide levels.

The Calgary Fire Department responded to the call just before 3 p.m.

According to a release they "found readings of 700 parts per million in an elevator shaft and 500 PPM in a common hallway."

Crews made the decision to evacuate the building upon their arrival, said Calgary Fire.

An investigation is ongoing. City Transit buses were brought in to shelter residents until they can enter the building. METRO

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1 Visit onstar.ca for coverage maps, details and system limitations. Services vary by model, conditions and geographical and technical restrictions. OnStar with 4G LTE connectivity is available on select models and in select markets. Customers will be able to access OnStar services only if they accept the OnStar User Terms and Privacy Statement and Software Terms. After the trial period (if applicable), an active OnStar service plan is required. **2** Devices must be WPA2 compliant. Wi-Fi devices manufactured prior to 2006 may not be compatible. Please consult your device manufacturer for information regarding the WPA2 security protocol and Wi-Fi device compatibility. Vehicle must be started or in accessory mode to access Wi-Fi. Visit onstar.ca for system details and limitations. **3** 2015 Cruze LTZ fuel consumption ratings based on GM testing in accordance with new 2015 Model Year Government of Canada approved test methods. Refer to vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca for details. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. **4** Offer available to qualified retail customers in Canada for vehicles delivered from July 30th and August 31st, 2015. 0% purchase financing offered on approved credit by TD Auto Finance Services, Scotiabank® or RBC Royal Bank for 84 months on all new or demonstrator 2015 Cruze LS 1SA & Diesel. Participating lenders are subject to change. Rates from other lenders will vary. Down payment, trade and/or security deposit may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment/trade. Example: $40,000 at 0% APR, the monthly payment is $476.19 for 84 months. Cost of borrowing is $0, total obligation is $40,000. Offer is unconditionally interest-free. Freight and air tax ($100, if applicable) included. Licence, insurance, registration, PPSA, applicable taxes and dealer fees not included. Dealers are free to set individual prices. 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Calgary's best bathrooms square off in national contest

Bank and Baron Pub general manager Clionadh Flanagan showcases the restaurant's washroom. JEREMY SIMES/FOR METRO

CINTAS CANADA

Winner gets $2,500 in facility services

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

When you've got to go, you might as well hit some of the nicest loos in town.

According to Cintas Canada, the Bank and Baron Pub and Tommyfield Gastro Pub both have loos that won't make you want to pee your pants.

In fact, those washrooms are among the top five places to take a squat in Canada, according to Cintas.

The Bank and Baron was chosen for its fanciful finishes and Tommyfield made the cut for its private stalls that resemble England's iconic red telephone booths, Cintas said.

Bank and Baron general manager Clionadh Flanagan said she was delighted to find out the restaurant made the final cut.

"A lot of finances were put in place to get this place as beautiful as it is," she said. "So it's lovely to get some recognition."

Flanagan said the restaurant put much effort into designing it's bathrooms — a new build rather than a renovation — using local design company Corea Sotropa. "The colours are really good and the tiles are unusual," she said. "They're also large washrooms, which is always a good thing."

Tommyfield manager Jack Abad said the pub also put heavy thought into the design of its washroom.

"Our bathrooms are pretty cool," he said. "We're very honoured to be nominated."

Having a drink at the Bank and Baron, Byron Osling said he'd give the restroom a 9/10.

"They're big, they're clean, and there's lots of stalls," he said. "What makes it a great restroom is that you don't have to think about going into something that's not so pleasant."

Cintas will choose the winner of the best restroom contest this fall, the best loo will be awarded $2,500 in Cintas facility services.

"We'd be happy if either of us won," Flanagan said. "But we'd love to win, of course."

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- Visual elements that are pleasing to the eye.
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Crockatt pulls out of Pride Parade

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Conservative contender to mark event in 'another way'

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Federal Conservative candidate Joan Crockatt has released a statement on her Facebook page, telling the public and residents of Calgary Centre she will not be walking in this year's Calgary Pride parade.

This comes after she repeatedly came under fire for her planned participation when the public and Pride organizers noticed she had voted against a controversial trans-rights bill.

On Tuesday, Egale, a LGBTQ rights group, blasted Crockatt after she told Pride organizers her vote against the bill was somehow guided by the group.

After not having spoken to the media directly on any Pride Parade-related matters, Crockatt released a statement on Facebook late Tuesday night.

"The Pride Parade celebrates diversity — something I do every day working for residents in Calgary Centre," read the statement.

"I do not want my participation to divert attention away from the efforts of organizers of this event. That is why I will mark Pride in another way this year, and continue to discuss issues of importance to the community with as many people as I can at the doors."

Although in attendance at last year's ceremonies, Joan Crockatt, right, is facing criticism for voting against Bill C-279, which favours trans rights. TWITTER/@CROCKATEER

BYELECTION

Candidate 'lying to voters' in online bio

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Calgary-Foothills Progressive Conservative by-election candidate Blair Houston has been accused of lying in his bio on his candidate profile.

Houston's biography states: "He studied business at the University of California and has been a business owner in the food and beverage industry for more than 12 years."

Wildrose strategist Vitor Marciano said he believes Houston is "lying to the voters" by stating that he has a business degree from the University of California.

> **College of the Desert may be a lovely school but it's not part of the University of California system.**
> Wildrose strategist Victor Marciano

Metro confirmed Wednesday with Houston's campaign manager Ed Tam that Houston had studied at The College of the Desert in Palm Springs.

"I was pretty sure that Blair had gone to College of the Desert and College of the Desert has absolutely nothing to do with the University of California system," said Marciano.

Metro conducted an independent search online and was not able to find The College of the Desert on a list of schools related to the University of California.

"There are many campuses there so he's not misleading, he's just not identifying which campus he's going to," said Tam. "We're not trying to mislead anybody but we can clarify that if you raise the question."

Marciano said saying The College of the Desert is related to University of Caliornia is "a convenient interpretation."

"I think not only would you have to clarify but you would explain to the voters how you confused a community college in Palm Springs with a prestigious university system with multiple schools," he said. "College of the Desert may be a lovely school but it's not part of the University of California system. Period."

Blair Houston TWITTER

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IN BRIEF

Base jumper badly hurt after hitting Alberta foothills cliff

A base jumper was critically injured after he hit a cliff in a remote area of the Alberta foothills.

Kananaskis Country Public Safety, a rescue organization working within Alberta Environment, says the 39-year-old man parachuted off a cliff near Nordegg on Tuesday.

The organization says on its Facebook site the parachute did not fully open after the man hit the cliff.

It helped Rocky Mountain House search and rescue members, paramedics and RCMP in the backcountry rescue. KCPS and Alpine Helicopters did a heli-sling rescue and then the man was transferred to Stars air ambulance.

The 39-year-old man was taken to a Calgary hospital in critical condition.

METRO

COLLISION

One man dead after Stoney Trail crash

The westbound lanes of Stoney Trail at Sarcee were closed to traffic for several hours Wednesday following a fatal collision between a semi-truck and an SUV.

The lone occupant of the SUV, an adult male, sustained fatal injuries and was declared dead on scene by paramedics, according to EMS.

No other injuries have been reported and no one was transported to hospital.

The incident occurred at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Motorists were told to expect delays and avoid the area for the time being as the Calgary Police Traffic Section conducted their investigation.

METRO

Jonathan Brower regularly frequents the affirming Hillhurst United Church. JEREMY SIMES/FOR METRO

LGBTQ and religious

IDENTITY

Gay man of faith wants his journey to be understood

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

It's a question Jonathan Brower asks every day: how do you regain your love for God when some in the Christian community can't accept you for your sexual orientation?

Brower said he doesn't yet have that answer. However, he said he hopes people will understand the complexities surrounding faith and sexuality through a staged reading of his production, Oblivion, at the Hillhurst United Church.

Raised through the Evangelical church, Brower said he chose to take reparative therapy to hopefully rid himself of being gay.

But that didn't work, he said, adding he left that church to be true to himself. "I chose to be a Christian when I was a kid," he said "I never made the choice to become gay."

He said embracing his sexuality, however, meant he lost an important part of his identity — faith. "A lot of people are stuck in the middle of this battle," he said. "It becomes this really toxic place." Even though he regularly frequents the affirming Hillhurst United Church, Brower said he still sometimes feels anxious when sitting amidst the pews.

However, he said those feelings have gradually become easier to deal with.

As it turns out, reconciling sexuality within faith comes with time and an openness that both the church and its believers must be willing to pursue, said Pam Rocker, affirming and creative co-ordinator at Hillhurst United Church. Once the barriers are removed, Rocker, who's also openly gay, said more important issues — like being a good person — can be dealt with.

"I think breaking down those barriers really saves lives," she said. Oblivion will be at the Hillhurst United Church on Sept. 7 at 7 p.m.

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SPECIAL REPORT ALBERTA ENERGY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALBERTA OIL MAGAZINE, METRO CALGARY WILL BRING YOU INFORMATION ON ALBERTA'S CHANGING OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PROVINCE'S ECONOMY.

HOW LOW CAN IT GO?

Some experts are cautiously optimistic that market fundamentals — and sentiment — mean a rise in price is in the not-so-distant future. DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Eric Nuttall isn't having much fun lately.

"It's horrible, to be quite honest," the portfolio manager of Sprott's Energy Fund says. It's no wonder, given that his fund is down almost 20 per cent on the year as of July 31, 2015, and 40 per cent over the last 12 months.

He's hardly alone, either. Baytex Energy shares now trade in the single digits. Crescent Point Energy is plumbing depths it hasn't seen in almost a decade.

But it's darkest before the dawn, and Nuttall thinks he can see a little bit of light on the horizon. That's because at current strip prices, he says, the oil-and-gas industry as it's currently constituted simply can't operate for long.

"You can technically be drilling wells that are earning a positive rate of return and still go bankrupt — it's the aspect that I think people truly don't understand," he said. "Even with cost deflation at 20 or 30 per cent, I think industry still requires a price of at least $60 to be able to offset declines."

But despite the torrent of negative news about, well, everything, be it stubbornly high supply levels to slackening demand in China, Nuttall is cautiously — and, perhaps, quietly — bullish.

Demand for refined products, he points out, is still growing, and at the fastest rate since the global economy was emerging from the Great Recession in 2010.

Even at its best, Iran will add 800,000 barrels per day of new production, an amount he says is equivalent to six months of global demand growth.

And Iran, Nuttall says, is a "one-hit" wonder when it comes to production growth, given the difficulty it will have attracting the kind of investment it needs to push it higher.

"Good luck getting foreign national companies to want to go into Iran at $42.50."

With Saudi production likely capped at 10.5 million barrels per day — in order to avoid risking formation damage, Nuttall says — and U.S. production on the verge of tipping over into a year-over-year decline, he thinks things could turn pretty quickly.

"The mechanisms for rebalancing the market are there, and personally I think they're going to happen much faster than people believe."

He's not alone. MNP's David Yager thinks that comparisons to the mid-1980s are, in his words, "ludicrous."

"When oil prices collapsed in 1986 and remained low in real terms for 15 years, world oil supply exceeded demand by about 14 million b/d (barrels per day). This was nearly 25 percent of world demand of 60 million b/d. The current surplus of supply over demand is about three million b/d, or three percent," he said.

"Depending on production increases, the surplus will fall to one million b/d, then zero. This is nothing like the situation in the mid-1980s and to suggest otherwise is uniformed and irresponsible."

Indeed, Yager says, the very fact that the oil trade has become so one-sidedly bearish is an indication that more bullish times may be ahead.

"What the industry has always done is extrapolate," he writes, "(and) whatever happened yesterday will continue. If things are good, they always will be. If it is bad, it will remain so forever. After 36 years of writing about the always-volatile oilpatch, the only constant is the herd is usually wrong, regardless of the direction it is headed."

ALBERTA OIL MAGAZINE

INSIDE ALBERTA OIL'S SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Fort Hills is the latest oilsands mining project getting built in Fort McMurray. But with prices down and environmental concerns up, could it be the last one?

Crude-oil tankers have demonstrated a nasty habit of blowing up lately. Can the industry build a truly safe tanker car without breaking the bank? Cal Broder is an entrepreneur who thinks he's developed a process that can cut costs, raise margins and make transporting bitumen completely safe.

Alberta Oil finds out if it — and he — are for real.

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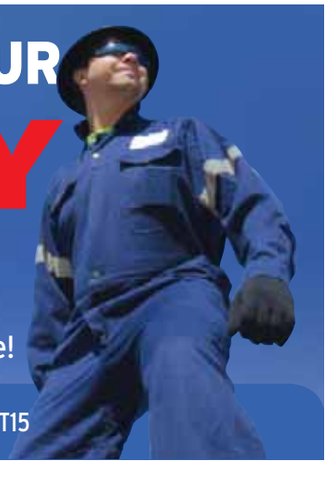

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NORTHWEST ALBERTA

Regulator responds to NuVista spill

A pipeline in northwestern Alberta has spilled about 100,000 litres of a mixture of wastewater, oil and gas.

Calgary-based NuVista Energy owns the six-inch diameter oil emulsion pipeline, which leaked on the Hay Lake First Nation, about 100 kilometres northwest of High Level, Alta.

On Friday afternoon, a helicopter crew doing regular daily inspection and maintenance work saw a "small area of stressed vegetation" along the pipeline route and the line was shut down immediately, NuVista said in a statement Wednesday.

"Safety and protecting the environment are top priority at NuVista Energy," said CEO Jonathan Wright. "Our staff train regularly for potential unexpected events. We responded within minutes as soon as we knew there was a problem."

The five-kilometre pipeline runs from an oil testing facility to an oil battery.

So far, there have been no reports of harm to wildlife. A two-metre-high fence has been put up to prevent animals from getting into the site.

NuVista said Alberta Energy Regulator investigators and First Nations officials inspected the property on Sunday.

The company said an initial survey indicates an area of about 110 metres by 120 metres has been affected.

Workers are laying down mats to allow heavy equipment into the remote site.

In June, a pipeline at Nexen's Long Lake oilsands site southeast of Fort McMurray, Alta., spilled about five million litres of bitumen, sand and produced water over a 16,000 square metre area. Produced water is a term used by the industry to describe water produced as a byproduct along with oil and gas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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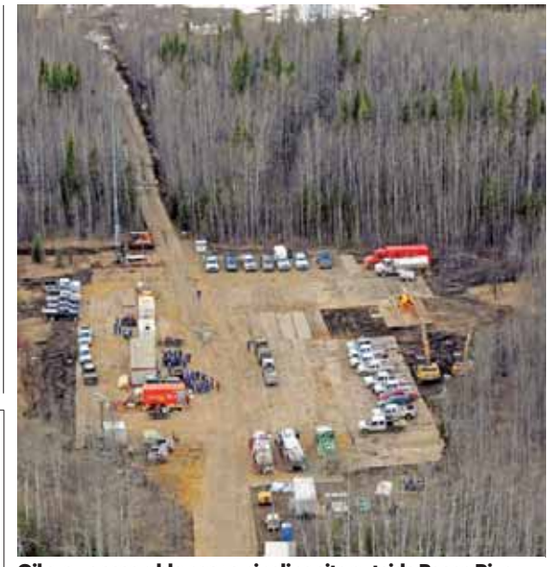

Oil crews assemble near a pipeline site outside Peace River. Small Alberta towns are feeling the impact of low oil prices.

CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Oilpatch feeling the crude pinch

ECONOMY

Small towns among most hard-hit areas

Oil prices are the lowest they've been since the Great Recession and mayors in Alberta's oilpatch are noticing the difference.

"The barber says that he has less customers coming in," says Tom Tarpey, mayor of Peace River, population 7,000.

"I certainly notice less trucks and cars parked at the hotels in town overnight."

The northwestern Alberta town is eager to see the boost from Shell's Carmon Creek oilsands project. But in May, the company decided to slow the development by two years while it looks for ways to drive down costs amid a pronounced slump in oil prices.

U.S. benchmark oil dropped below $41 US a barrel in Wednesday trading. The last time West Texas Intermediate crude languished there was early 2009.

"We don't anticipate the price of oil increasing in short order," said Tarpey. "We see a year to maybe two years before the price of oil recovers to the heady days of $75 US-plus."

As a result, Peace River is looking to Alberta's NDP government for "economic stimulus" in the form of infrastructure projects, he said.

In Grande Prairie, a city of nearly 69,000 about a two-hour drive southwest, the impact is also being felt, said Mayor Bill Given.

But — as is the case in Peace River — the oil and gas industry isn't the only game in town. For instance, the forestry industry is buffering the impact of the oil downturn somewhat.

Grande Prairie's energy industry is also heavily focused on natural gas.

Operators in the area have been dealing with low prices for that commodity for years and have learned to become more efficient, Given said.

"Yes, we're down. Are we down as far as other parts of the province? No, probably not. Would we like to be up a little bit higher? Yeah, sure, potentially. But overall, we're doing fairly well."

Omer Moghrabi, mayor of Lac la Biche, Alta., — about two and a half hours northeast of Edmonton and close to where the likes of Cenovus and Canadian Natural Resources have major oilsands operations — figures his town has been through three or four busts over the past four decades.

"We thought it would start to rebound a little quicker," he said of this downturn.

Moghrabi figures the shadow population has dropped to some degree, but it's not clear by how much. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Speaking out on C-level earnings

COMPENSATION

Energy sector may soon face say-on-pay aggression

It's been a tough slog lately for Canada's gold miners.

The biggest of the bunch, Barrick Gold, lost more than $3 billion in 2014 after losing more than $10 billion a year earlier as the price of its namesake commodity was nearly cut in half.

But if you thought that performance might have tempered the generosity of the company's compensation committee, well, you'd have been wrong.

Barrick chairman John Thornton was rewarded with a $3.46-million raise, one that brought his overall pay package up to $12.9 million in 2014. At Barrick's annual general meeting on April 28, fully three-quarters of shareholders voted against the proposed pay package for Thornton and the rest of Barrick's executive team.

Barrick Gold chairman John Thornton THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

But the question now, for many energy executives, is whether that attention shifts onto their own compensation decisions. And given that their key commodities have sold off even more sharply over the last year than gold did in 2014, it might be more a matter of when than if that attention shows up in the rooms that play host to annual general meetings in Calgary every spring.

No Canadian energy company has ever lost a say-on-pay vote, but Canadian Natural Resources came awfully close in 2013. The company's compensation package was approved by just 55.8 per cent of shareholders, and it was an outcome that sent its compensation committee back to the proverbial drawing board.

Crescent Point Energy had a close call of its own in 2014, with only 56.7 per cent of its voting shareholders supporting a pay package for senior executives that included a 130 per cent raise for CEO Scott Saxberg.

And while the pain that energy company shareholders have been feeling of late didn't translate into any defeats in this year's proxy season, ISS Corporate Services executive director John Roe says that the real test will come in 2016.

"I think next year is going to be the big bellwether for say-on-pay and energy companies," he said.

"They (shareholders) are going to be much more aggressive in holding compensation committees accountable for their decisions in the 2016 season."

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Public servants fear data leak

ASHLEY MADISON

If data turns out to be valid, Ottawa is top city for cheaters

The apparent email addresses of hundreds of Canadian federal, provincial and municipal government employees are contained in a massive leaked list of names purported to be users of Ashley Madison, a matchmaking website for cheating spouses.

Ashley Madison does not send verification emails, meaning the accounts might not belong to actual users of the site and could simply be the work of disgruntled tricksters.

Further, the data goes back to 2004, suggesting some email addresses may no longer be operational.

In a statement, Toronto-based Ashley Madison's parent company, Avid Life Media, said it was actively monitoring and investigating the leak to determine the validity of any information posted online.

It did not immediately respond to a question about why people can register for Ashley Madison with unverified or fake email addresses.

A viewer looks at Ashley Madison's Korean website in Seoul. LEE JIN-MAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Federally, more than 170 addresses associated with the Canadian Armed Forces are on the list, and hundreds more from other departments and agencies, including justice, public works, the Canada Revenue Agency and the RCMP.

At least one MP was registered by name. Several email addresses attached to the Senate were registered although not under any sitting senators' names.

According to data on AshleyMadison.com, there were more than 55,000 users on the website living in Ottawa in 2013, making it the most infidelity-friendly city in Canada.

Hackers leaked the list after claiming Ashley Madison refused to bow to their demands to close the site. A message posted online said "Time's Up!" and accused parent company Avid Life Media of deceit and incompetence.

Computer security expert Brian Krebs, who writes the KrebsOnSecurity blog, said many of the leaked accounts appeared to be little more than a name and an email address, raising questions about their authenticity.

"But when you start factoring in payment information, that becomes harder to explain," he said.

Krebs said Ashley Madison does not send verification emails and allows multiple accounts to be linked to a single email address in an effort to aid users' privacy.

"They wanted to remove the ability for anybody to do that reconnaissance and try to register to find out if somebody was already a member," he said. "They wanted their users to have deniability." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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RELATIONSHIPS

Therapist says infidelity can indicate unresolved issues

Cheating can devastate any relationship — but what to do with the remnants? Torstar News Service talks to experts to figure out the next steps for both cheater and victim in the wake of the recent hacking of the affair-facilitating service Ashley Madison.

If your spouse or partner might be cheating, confront, talk and be honest, "but not in an accusatory way," says relationship expert Kimberly Moffit, who heads KMA Therapy in Toronto.

Cheating is a symptom of an underlying problem, she said — if you want to remain a couple, solve that.

"Just because they signed up for a site, it doesn't necessarily mean they had a physical affair," she added, but that's beside the point.

Whether to believe one's partner actually cheated would depend on individual situations, but a person's name being on Ashley Madison is in itself a problem, Moffit said.

Often, cheating — or the intention to cheat — is a result of neither party putting effort into a relationship or a series of unresolved disagreements, she said. "(A relationship) is kind of like a plant: you need to water it. Having time when you can dream and live together — that's really important." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CYBERSECURITY

Corporations open to hacking

Canadians are clueless about the vast majority of corporate data hacks because the cost of revealing a breach hits companies' bottom lines harder than keeping consumers in the dark.

Wednesday's cyber attack on Toronto's infidelity dating site Ashley Madison shone a spotlight on a risk that usually lurks in the shadows due to a lack of legal incentives to report hacks, experts say.

"The security at Canadian organizations today is inadequate," said Claudiu Popa, CEO of cyber security firm Informatica Corp.

"In Canada, we don't have a law that is prescriptive enough to tell companies that they absolutely need to buy this or that type of technology."

While the government is required to report data breaches such as last year's Heartbleed attack at the Canada Revenue Agency, private companies are not required to report them.

The data leak on the notorious cheating website came to light because the hackers announced it, while last year's breach of thousands of Target Canada customers was revealed partly because the United States requires companies to report data breaches.

"It's in their best interest to play along and to invest in more sophisticated technology for detection and prevention," Popa said.

Canada's Digital Privacy Act, passed by the Senate in June, will require companies to report breaches once regulations are prepared. But experts say it is essentially toothless without financial penalties. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Harper sidesteps questions on Novak

DUFFY TRIAL

Still unclear if former aide will be fired

Conservative Leader Stephen Harper is staying mum on the fate of Ray Novak after court testimony that his top aide had direct knowledge of the secret payment to cover Mike Duffy's disputed expenses.

Pressed about the issue Wednesday during a campaign stop in London, Ont., Harper sidestepped media questions about what Novak knew and whether his long-time confidante still has his support.

"I'm certainly not going to comment on matters that are part of an ongoing court case," Harper told reporters.

On Tuesday, Duffy's fraud and breach of trust trial heard that Novak was in the room when Nigel Wright, at the time Harper's chief of staff, first told the prime minister's lawyer Ben Perrin that he intended to give the embattled senator $90,000 to repay the expenses.

That statement contradicts the Conservative party's version of events — that Novak was not in the loop on Wright's decision to personally pay Duffy's expenses.

Stephen Harper's chief of staff Ray Novak watches the prime minister speak to members of Caucus on Parliament Hill in May 2013. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The latest revelation puts a spotlight on Novak, who was promoted to chief of staff after Wright was forced out when his payment to Duffy became public in 2013.

It also raises fresh questions about what Harper himself knew about the deal. The Conservative leader has repeatedly said he had no knowledge that Wright himself had covered Duffy's costs.

Harper refused to respond to direct questions about whether Novak had his support and would remain involved in the ongoing election campaign.

Both the Liberals and New Democrats are calling on Harper to fire Novak and on Wednesday, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau urged the Conservative leader to "come clean" on the affair.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ELECTION 2015

Liberals promise flex work

Under a Liberal government, one million employees would have the right to request flexible work hours to help them balance the demands of work and family, Justin Trudeau said Wednesday.

Trudeau told a Winnipeg rally that, if elected this fall, his party would ensure all employees covered by federal labour law would have the legal right to ask their bosses for flexibility in their workday start and finish times, as well as the ability to work from home.

"The way Canadians work is changing. The way Canadians live is changing," he told about 200 supporters. "It's about recognizing that we can increase the productivity for Canadians and protect their quality of life in a way that will grow the economy."

A Liberal government would amend the Canada Labour Code and would also work with provincial and territorial governments to put the same rights into their own labour legislation, Trudeau said.

While employees would have the right to ask for more flexible work hours, there is nothing in the Liberal plan that would require employers to grant the request. "The employee is allowed to ask and the employer needs to formally respond in writing to that request," Trudeau said.

A similar plan in the United Kingdom has shown that about 80 per cent of requests from employees for changes in work hours are eventually granted, he added.

But NDP Leader Tom Mulcair called the proposal "wanting" and wouldn't say whether his party would support a similar initiative.

"You're going to be allowed to ask for flexible hours but your employer can say no," Mulcair said during a stop in Surrey, B.C. "Well, that's already the case today so I'm not too sure what they announced, to be honest with you."

The Conservatives criticized the proposal saying the "entire 'policy' involves employers writing a letter."

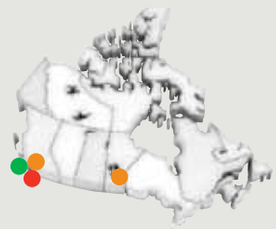
"Justin's announcement lacks any teeth or enforceability, and does not apply to the vast majority of workers," the party said in an emailed statement.

Dan Kelly, president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, said it's not clear what the Liberal proposal would accomplish. Informal requests are made by employees across Canada already and are granted, he said.

In fact, he said current labour law can stand in the way of such arrangements by binding the hands of employers to pay overtime. By enshrining the process in legislation, Kelly said it could create more red tape.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WHERE THE LEADERS ARE TODAY



- **Justin Trudeau** will be in Victoria, B.C., to make an announcement.
- **Tom Mulcair** will be in Vancouver and will attend a rally in Winnipeg.
- **Elizabeth May** will attend a concert in Brentwood Bay, B.C.

Stephen Harper's itinerary was unavailable.

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Guilty plea expected

CRIME

Ex-sandwich pitchman may face up to 30 years in prison

Longtime Subway pitchman Jared Fogle agreed Wednesday to plead guilty to allegations that he paid for sex acts with minors and received child pornography in a case that destroyed his career at the sandwich-shop chain and could send him to prison for more than a decade.

Prosecutors allege that Fogle knew the pornography had been secretly produced by the former director of his charitable foundation, which sought to raise awareness about childhood obesity and arranged for Fogle to visit schools and urge children to adopt healthy eating and exercise habits.

Authorities reviewed tens of thousands of text messages and emails as part of their investigation into Fogle, who used "wealth, status and secrecy" to exploit children, U.S. Attorney Josh Minkler said.

A tight-lipped Fogle sat in federal court with his hands clasped and quietly answered "no" when the judge asked whether he had any questions about his rights.

He is expected to enter the formal plea at a later date to one count each of travelling to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor and distribution and receipt of child pornography.

The agreement released by prosecutors said Fogle will pay $1.4 million in restitution to 14 minor victims, who will each receive $100,000.

He will also be required to register as a sex offender and undergo treatment for sexual disorders.

The child-porn charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

The count involving sex with a minor is punishable by up to 30 years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

$1.4 million

The amount the accused will pay in restitution to his victims — $100,000 each.

Former Subway spokesman Jared Fogle leaves his home in Zionsville, Ind., last month. MICHAEL CONROY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

SOUTH AFRICA

Pistorius early release withdrawn

Two days before he was due to leave prison, Oscar Pistorius' early release was suddenly put on hold Wednesday by South Africa's Department of Justice, which sent his case back to a parole board.

It was unclear when the board would be able to meet again, justice department spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga said, but it was unlikely a new decision could be made by Friday's initially planned release date.

Pistorius, the double-amputee Olympic runner, is serving a five-year sentence for manslaughter for killing girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp in 2013. He was eligible to be moved from jail to house arrest after serving one-sixth of that sentence, or 10 months, which is up on Friday.

Wednesday would also have been Steenkamp's 32nd birthday, and her parents earlier held a beachside ceremony in their hometown of Port Elizabeth on South Africa's south coast.

In blocking Pistorius' release, the justice department said he was approved for home correctional supervision by parole officials in June, only eight months into his sentence. By law he should have served 10 months of his sentence before his case could be reviewed, the department said.

"It is apparent therefore that the decision to release him on 21 August 2015 was made prematurely on 5 June 2015 when the offender was not eligible to be considered at all," the justice department said in a statement.

Spokesman Mhaga said "the decision of the parole board will have to be suspended" until the board can meet again for a fresh hearing. Justice minister Michael Masutha would now study Pistorius' "profile" and the original parole-board decision, the department said.

The earliest the board could now meet again would be Friday.

The justice minister's decision to review Pistorius' early release was "valid," said Mannie Witz, a South African criminal-law expert, but continuing Pistorius' detention could be challenged in court. The review would not affect Pistorius' future eligibility for release, Witz said.

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TURKEY SPEAKING OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE A man protesting Turkey's operations against Kurdish militants holds a sign that says "Peace Block," in Istanbul on Wednesday. There has been a sharp escalation of violence between Turkey's security forces and the Kurdistan PKK, along with the collapse of a two-year peace process with the rebels.
CAGDAS ERDOGAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DIPLOMACY

Outrage over Iranian secret agreement

Iran will be allowed to use its own inspectors to investigate a site it has been accused of using to develop nuclear arms, operating under a secret agreement with the UN agency that normally carries out such work, according to a document seen by The Associated Press.

The revelation on Wednesday newly riled Republican lawmakers in the U.S. who have been severely critical of a broader agreement to limit Iran's future nuclear programs, signed by the Obama administration, Iran and five world powers in July. Those critics have complained that the wider deal is unwisely built on trust of the Iranians, while the administration has insisted it depends on reliable inspections.

A skeptical House Speaker John Boehner said, "President Obama boasts his deal includes 'unprecedented verification.' He claims it's not built on trust. But the administration's briefings on these side deals have been totally insufficient — and it still isn't clear whether anyone at the White House has seen the final documents."

Said House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce: "International inspections should be done by international inspectors. Period."

The newly disclosed side agreement, for an investigation of the Parchin nuclear site by the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency, is linked to persistent allegations that Iran has worked on atomic weapons. That investigation is part of the overarching nuclear-limits deal.

Evidence of the inspections concession is sure to increase pressure from U.S. congressional opponents before a Senate vote of disapproval on the overall agreement in early September. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Famine on horizon in Yemen: UN

MIDDLE EAST

Conflict, blocked ports leading to 'perfect storm'

The war in Yemen has pushed the country to the brink of famine, with both commercial food imports and aid deliveries held up by the fighting and millions of hungry women and children facing possible starvation, the United Nations said Wednesday.

Ertharin Cousin, head of the UN's World Food Program, said that while some food aid is flowing in, fighting around major ports is stalling deliveries, while reaching the country's interior is proving difficult and donor funding is still falling short.

"If we do not receive the additional access that is required to meet the needs of those who are affected by this ongoing conflict, if we cannot support the commercial markets by ensuring that the ports are open and providing food to ensure that those who have resources can buy the food that is necessary, and if we do not see increased donor support, we are facing the perfect storm in Yemen," she told reporters in Cairo.

Cousin was in Cairo following a three-day trip to Yemen. The WFP says all sides in the conflict must approve food deliveries.

UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien, who also just returned from Yemen, told the UN Security Council he was shocked by what he saw: Four out of five Yemenis are in need of humanitarian assistance, nearly 1.5 million people are internally displaced, and people were using cardboard for mattresses at a hospital where lights flickered, the blood bank had closed and there were no more examination gloves.

> **The scale of human suffering is almost incomprehensible.**
> Stephen O'Brien

Yemen's conflict pits Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, and troops loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against southern separatists, local and tribal militias, Sunni Islamic militants and troops loyal to President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who is in exile in Saudi Arabia.
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Syrian archeologist killed by ISIL militants

PALMYRA

81-year-old scholar hid treasures of ancient town

The 81-year-old antiquities scholar had dedicated his life to exploring and overseeing Syria's ancient ruins of Palmyra, one of the Middle East's most spectacular archaeological sites. He even named his daughter after Zenobia, the queen that ruled from the city 1,700 years ago.

That dedication may have cost him his life. On Wednesday, relatives and witnesses said Khaled al-Asaad was beheaded by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants, his bloodied body hung on a pole in a main square.

Antiquities officials said they believed ISIL militants had interrogated al-Asaad, a long-time director of the site, trying to get him to divulge where authorities had hidden treasures secreted out of Palmyra before the extremists seized the ruins last spring.

The brutal killing stunned Syria's archaeological community and underscored fears the extremists will destroy or loot the 2,000-year-old Roman-era city on the edge of a modern town of the same name, as they have other major archaeological sites in Syria and Iraq.

"We have lost not just a scholar of archaeology but one of the pillars of archaeology in the 20th century," said Ahmad Ferzat Taraqji, a 56-year-old antiquities expert and friend of the victim.

The Sunni extremists, who have imposed a violent interpretation of Islamic law across the territory they control in Syria and Iraq, claim ancient relics promote idolatry and say they are destroying them as part of their purge of paganism — though they are also believed to sell off looted antiquities, bringing in significant sums of cash.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Known as "Mr. Palmrya" among Syrian antiquities experts, Khaled al-Asaad refused to leave after Sunni extremists took claim of the community and neighbouring ruins, leading to his demise on Wednesday. SANA VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIA

Woman murdered for affair with cousin

Two brothers in northern India beheaded their teenage sister and carried her head through their village because they disapproved of her romantic relationship with a cousin, police said Wednesday.

At least a dozen people watched as 17-year-old Phool Jehan was dragged out of her house, beaten and beheaded by her brothers late Monday, but they did not inform the police, officer Rajesh Singh said. The crime was reported by a local security guard.

Police have been unable to find the two brothers. Their ages were not clear, but they were both older than their sister.

After beheading Jehan, Nanhe and Gul Hasan left their sister's body in the street and roamed around the village with her head, shouting that they were against the relationship, Singh said.

Honour killings are common across India, but such brutal slayings are extremely rare.

As India modernizes rapidly, it finds itself in the midst of huge social turmoil as young people challenge accepted social norms. As more people attempt to break from tradition, they face backlash, often violent, especially in rural areas.

While the brothers are on the run, police have detained Jehan's cousin to question him, said B. Kumar, another police officer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BACKGROUND

Inequality persists in India

India is considered one of the harshest places in the world for women, with female infanticide and child marriage still common.

The United Nations' gender inequality index places India next to last, above only Saudi Arabia, based on labour, reproductive health, education and politics. The index does not consider issues of violence.

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Residents clean their apartments in the aftermath of the explosion at the Tianjin port. COLOR CHINA PHOTO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China firm flouted safety rules

TIANJIN WAREHOUSE

Shadow owners used high-level connections: State media

The son of a former police chief is one of two silent owners of the warehouse in Tianjin where explosions killed at least 114 people, and used his connections to help obtain licenses despite the hazmat facility violating safety rules, Chinese state media reported Wednesday.

The other owner is a former executive at a state-owned chemical company who also used his connections to smooth the way for approval for the facility, the official Xinhua News Agency said in a lengthy report on the warehouse company Ruihai International Logistics.

The report supports the common perception that well-connected private Chinese companies use personal relationships with people in the government to override rules, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

It also shed light on the murky ownership structure at Ruihai, which had been the source of rampant rumours of potential high-level connections and coverup since the Aug. 12 blasts, which also have left 65 missing and 674 in hospital.

The two men, identified as former Sinochem executive Yu Xuewei and the late Tianjin port police chief's son, Dong Shexuan, are among 10 Ruihai company officials who have been detained in the investigation into the blast.

Dong said that Yu enlisted him into the company in 2012 because of his connections and that he was easily able to obtain a fire certificate for the hazmat business.

The fire certificate apparently allowed local planning officials to issue a building permit, even though the hazmat warehouse would be less than the required 1,000 metres away from homes and public roads, a clear violation of state safety rules.

> **Yu Xuewei asked me not to worry, but leave it to him.**
> Dong Shexuan

Dong said Ruihai also had to clear another seemingly impossible obstacle. A safety evaluation firm had told Ruihai that a satisfactory report was out of question because of the warehouse's proximity to residential homes.

"But Yu Xuewei asked me not to worry, but leave it to him. So he changed the safety evaluation firm and got the report," Dong told Xinhua.

Both Yu and Dong chose to be shadow owners. Yu asked his wife's cousin to hold his 55 per cent share in Ruihai on his behalf, and Dong had a high school classmate claim his 45 per cent share.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHEMICAL BLAST

Info could have reduced damage: Expert

A UN human rights expert has criticized China for its lack of transparency in handling a chemical blast in the northeastern city of Tianjin.

Baskut Tuncak, UN's expert on hazardous substances and waste, said the disaster might have been prevented or the extent of the damage limited if authorities had provided more information and pointed to countries' obligations to inform the public about hazardous substances.

WAREHOUSE

Toxic chemicals
The warehouse stored 700 tons of sodium cyanide — a toxic chemical that is combustible on contact with water.

"This chemical disaster serves as yet another tragic example of the need of information about hazardous substances to protect, respect and realize human rights," he said in a statement. "The lack of information when needed — information that could have mitigated or perhaps even prevented this disaster — is truly tragic."

The comments amount to an unusually sharp rebuke for Beijing from a UN expert and join appeals in China for better communication from authorities about the fates of those who were killed or remain missing. The Aug. 12 blasts at a warehouse for hazardous materials in Tianjin killed at least 114 people. Another 65 people are still missing and 674 are hospitalized.

The statement criticized Chinese press restrictions after the explosions and called for "complete transparency" in the pending investigation.

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Germany OKs bailout deal

GREECE

Yes vote comes in nick of time for Thursday's debt deadline

Germany's parliament overwhelmingly approved a third bailout for Greece on Wednesday, removing the last hurdle to providing new loans to the country and keeping it from defaulting on its debts in as little as 24 hours.

The vote's result also dispelled speculation that Chancellor Angela Merkel would have difficulty getting her conservative bloc to sign on. Lawmakers voted 453-113 in favour, with 18 abstentions.

Along with an approval from the Dutch parliament, the German vote means Greece is cleared by European states' parliaments to get the first instalment of its new 86-billion-euro ($95 billion US) three-year package of loans.

The country needs the cash to make a debt repayment Thursday.

People stroll past a souvenir shop in central Athens, Wednesday, a day before Greece was due to make a payment to avoid defaulting on its debt to European and other creditors. PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The German parliamentary approval was never in doubt, but in a similar vote last month, 60 members of Merkel's conservative bloc voted against. Some local media had speculated that as many as double that could rebel this time as Germans are increasingly skeptical about giving Greece more money, but in the end only 63 from her bloc of 311 voted against.

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, a senior member of Merkel's Christian Democratic Party who has been one of the harshest critics of Greece, may have helped the cause, as he lobbied hard ahead of the vote for the passage of Greece's third bailout in five years.

Schaeuble told lawmakers that while voting in favour of the bailout wasn't an easy decision for him, approval of the three-year loan package is "in the interest of Greece and the interest of Europe."

> **If Greece stands by its obligations ... then the economy can grow again.**
> German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble

Germany is the largest single contributor to the bailouts, and many in Schaeuble's party remain skeptical. Merkel's coalition partner, the Social Democrats, and the opposition Greens also backed the deal.

In the Netherlands, a majority of lawmakers also gave its backing to the new Greek rescue after a heated debate in which Prime Minister Mark Rutte was attacked for reneging on an election pledge to not approve another bailout for Greece.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

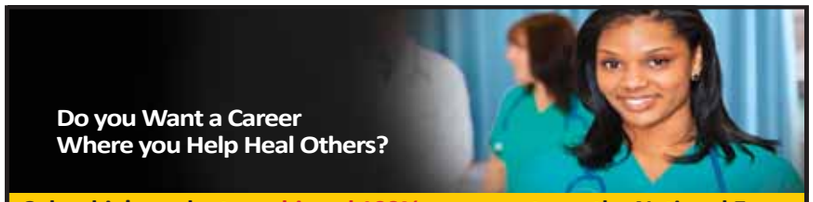
NEW BRUNSWICK

Refinery planning mega project

Canada's largest oil refinery will announce details this week of what it calls the largest maintenance project in the company's history.

A notice from Irving Oil says the project, which will be revealed Thursday in Saint John, N.B., will be one of the largest private-sector investments in Canada this year.

Premier Brian Gallant has been hinting for days that a major announcement is coming that could create thousands of jobs in southwestern New Brunswick. He said the Irving project is private-sector investment, without government funding. The Irving Oil refinery opened in 1960 and produces more than 300,000 barrels of refined product each day. The facility has been upgraded numerous times, including a $1.5-billion project in 2000. THE CANADIAN PRESS



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IN BRIEF

USDA seeking bids from bird-flu vaccine makers
The U.S. Department of Agriculture is taking bids from animal-health companies for a bird-flu vaccine, saying it is preparing for the possible return this fall of the H5N2 virus that resulted in the death of 48 million birds.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

B.C. oysters recalled
Oysters harvested from B.C. coastal waters on or before Tuesday and sold for raw consumption are being recalled because they may contain unacceptable levels of a bacterium called Vibrio parahaemolyticus.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

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GOLD $1,127.90 US (+$11.00)

NATURAL GAS: $2.716 US (+1.2¢)
DOW JONES: 17,348.73 (-162.61)

PHARMACEUTICALS

Female aphrodisiac gets FDA clearance

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the first prescription drug designed to boost sexual desire in women, a milestone long sought by a pharmaceutical industry eager to replicate the blockbuster success of impotence drugs for men.

But stringent safety measures on the daily pill called Addyi mean it will probably never achieve the sales of Viagra, which has generated billions of dollars since the late 1990s.

> **This is not a drug you take an hour before you have sex.**
> Sex therapist Leonore Tiefer

The drug's label will bear a boxed warning — the most serious type — alerting doctors and patients to the risks of dangerously low blood pressure and fainting, especially when the pill is combined with alcohol. The same problems can occur when taking the drug with other commonly prescribed medications, including antifungals used to treat yeast infections.

Under an FDA-imposed safety plan, doctors will only be able to prescribe Addyi after completing an online certification process that requires counselling patients about Addyi's risks. Pharmacists will also need certification and will be required to remind patients not to drink alcohol while taking the drug.

Opponents of Sprout Pharmaceutical's drug say it's not worth the side effects, which also include nausea, drowsiness and dizziness. They point out that the FDA rejected the drug twice, in 2010 and 2013, due to these risks.

"This is not a drug you take an hour before you have sex. You have to take it for weeks and months in order to see any benefit at all," said Leonore Tiefer, a psychologist and sex therapist who organized a petition last month calling on the FDA to reject the drug.

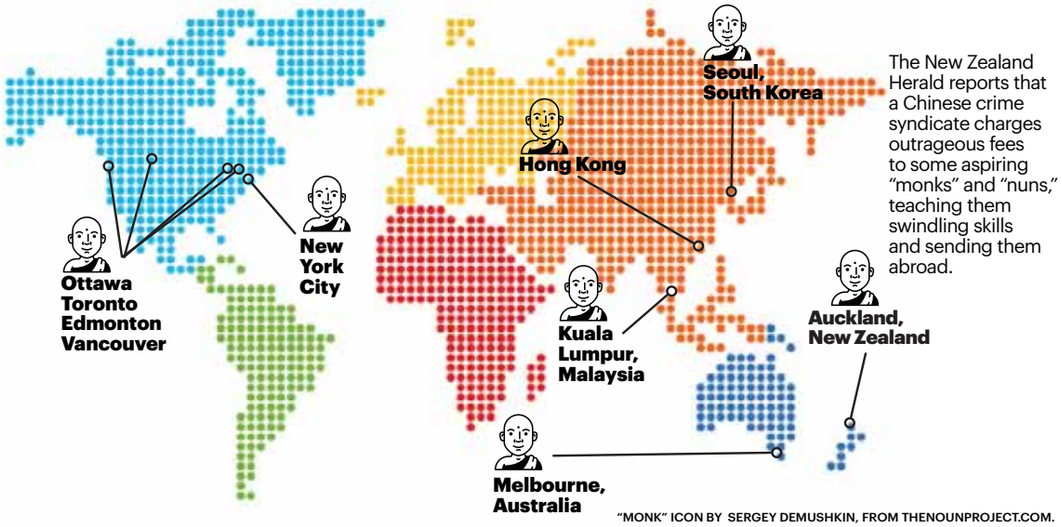
The search for such a pill was pursued and later abandoned by Pfizer, Bayer and Procter & Gamble, among others. Drugs that act on blood flow, hormones and other biological functions all proved ineffective. Addyi, known generically as flibanserin, is the first drug that acts on brain chemicals that affect mood and appetite.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, August 20, 2015

THE BIG THING: BOGUS BUDDHISTS

The routine is suspiciously similar in cities around the world: Men dressed in flowing orange robes approach passersby, slipping a bracelet onto their wrists or handing them a gold-foil token with a garbled platitude like "Work Smoothly Lifetime Peace." Then they demand a donation of $10 or more, sometimes with a story about a temple needing repair. But it's a ruse: Though real monks may accept donations of food, the monastic lifestyle forbids begging. This has spurred speculation about where these not-so-pious panhandlers came from and if their efforts are organized. Here are just a few places where they've been spotted.

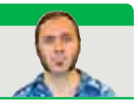


The New Zealand Herald reports that a Chinese crime syndicate charges outrageous fees to some aspiring "monks" and "nuns," teaching them swindling skills and sending them abroad.

"MONK" ICON BY SERGEY DEMUSHKIN, FROM THENOUNPROJECT.COM.

Trophy hunting actually helps lions like Cecil

Gabriel Zarate



If you don't know who Cecil the lion was by now, you've been living in a cave. Actually, even people in caves probably have Internet and know about Cecil, too. But they probably *haven't* been living near lions.

Because in all the international furor over Cecil, who was killed outside Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe in July, one important thing to know about lions has been forgotten: Lions eat people.

It doesn't happen often, but it is a fact of life for people living in countries where lions roam free. In Tanzania, where human population growth has squeezed habitat space for lions and depleted their usual prey animals, 871 people have been killed or wounded by lions from 1990 to 2005, according to the journal Nature.

As such, lions aren't the most popular neighbours. Zimbabwean academic Goodwell Nzou wrote in the New York Times that villagers, armed with machetes and spears, keep children indoors when they know a lion is in town.

"In my village in Zimbabwe, surrounded by wildlife conservation areas, no lion has ever been beloved, or granted an affectionate nickname. They are objects of terror."

Without the protection of the law, lions may be killed or driven out of the area to protect children and livestock.

Many wildlife management experts believe trophy hunting encourages governments to protect lions as assets, rather than allowing villages to exterminate them as pests. According to one 2012 study, a single sport hunt brings $24,000 to $71,000 US into the local economy.

While the international media wrings its hands over Cecil's death, driven by armchair outrage on social media, Africans shake their heads. Sub-Saharan African countries are impoverished compared to the West. Their wilderness is vast, wildlife patrols aren't free and poaching and habitat loss are far more serious threats to animal populations than trophy hunting, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Contrary to popular wisdom, lions aren't technically endangered. The IUCN Red List lists the lion as "threatened," meaning some populations are thriving while some are not. The major risk to the lion as a species — the reason their population declined 42 per cent from 1993 to 2014 — is primarily habitat loss.

When a rich foreigner spends tens of thousands of dollars on a hunt, it injects that money into national and local economies. Money may be the root of all evil, but try telling that to a Zimbabwean with kids to look after.

The money from trophy hunts helps pay for the salaries and equipment of wildlife conservation officers, who can still be outgunned by poachers serving a multi-million-dollar illegal trade in animal parts. In some countries the income from trophy hunts goes directly to conservation programs.

Trophy hunting indirectly helps preserve habitat for lions and their neighbours — cheetahs, leopards, impala and so many others. Without this commercial incentive, people do what people have done for millennia: Raze the wilderness to create farmland or pasture.

The Twitterverse can bemoan the death of one majestic animal all it wants, but until the crushing poverty in Africa is addressed and defeated, there will always be more Cecils.

Gabriel Zarate is a Toronto-based editor who spent three years reporting from the Canadian North.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Distancing is easier than dealing with the deeper issues

It's distancing time.

First, for Subway and its sandwiches. Few things were more profitable, once, than a slimmed-down Jared Fogle holding a tuna footlong.

But Fogle is pleading guilty to child-sex and child-porn charges, and child abuse doesn't sell sandwiches.

Subway is scrubbing its image clean — taking down Fogle's picture in restaurants and ending their partnership.

"We no longer have a relationship with Jared and have no further comment," the fast-food giant tweeted on Tuesday.

It found more to say on Wednesday morning, after federal prosecutors released details of Fogle's guilty plea, and the fact he'll pay $100,000 to each of 14 victims.

"Jared Fogle's actions are inexcusable and do not represent our brand's values. We had already ended our relationship with Jared," read a company tweet.

If there's ever a time to agree with a corporation, it's on the count that Fogle's consumption of child pornography and his interstate trips to have sex with minors do not represent Subway's "values".

Then, for Ashley Madison, purveyor of affairs, it's a bit of a different dance. The company is distancing itself from the criminal behaviour of hackers who finally dumped the details of 32 million accounts. (It's always kept a safe distance from the moral high ground.) It's hardly had to defend its security practices, since hacks have become the new norm.

If you're one of Ashley Madison's millions of unmasked affair-seekers, the task of distancing yourself from your scheming self is trickier.

It will mostly be a more private affair — fewer Twitter statements, more head-hanging. Less "We no longer have a relationship" and... well, maybe a bit of that.

Ashley Madison devotees will need to operationalize their "If I'm outed" plans: Delete all traces of attempted or achieved affairs, secure a marriage counsellor, and gently prod friends for a spot on the couch. That's assuming public shaming is kept to a minimum, which might, admittedly, be assuming too much.

For the rest of us, there is the final act of distancing. By indulging in voyeuristic stories of cheating husbands, we don't have to look at the greater dysfunction of a society with million of sexless or bad-sex marriages. By turning a story of child sexual abuse into a story about Subway restaurants, we don't have to look at the greater network of criminals who bring children to men like Fogle.

We have no further comment.

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Eating her way through books

VORACIOUS

Turning a love of reading and food into a literary feast

Henrietta Walmark
Metro | Canada

Cara Nicoletti gathered her lit-themed recipes into a memoir. CONTRIBUTED

A butcher, a baker, a Yummy Books blog maker — Cara Nicoletti is all that, and the author of Voracious: A Hungry Reader Cooks Her Way Through Great Books (Little, Brown and Company, $34, Aug. 18).

A collection of recipes inspired by literature, Voracious grew out of Nicoletti's blog that in turn was an extension of a book club turned supper club whose popularity outgrew her modest Brooklyn apartment.

Although Nicoletti as a kid wanted to write fiction and moved from her hometown of Boston to study literature at NYU in 2004, she never imagined she would write a book about food.

"To be really honest, I thought my blog would only be read by my family and my closest friends," Nicoletti says. "I never thought it would turn into a book."

Food is important in her family. "My mom's side is Jewish and my dad's side is Italian and both cultures are food obsessed and really love to gather and eat together."

But it wasn't until Nicoletti started working in New York restaurants to support herself as a student that her appetite for making food became as voracious as her hunger for books.

"It's very physical work that was a nice counterpoint to working with my brain all day. I really looked forward to working with my hands … to see the product of my work in a physical way," says Nicoletti. "I really enjoyed doing the two things at once. I still do."

When asked about food's influence on her life, Nicoletti laughs. "It's everything. All day long, it's on my brain."

"I spent a lot of years wringing my hands over the fact that food is my greatest comfort. Food and books are both my greatest comfort. I'll never be one of those women who gets really worked up and forgets to eat. The older I get the more I realize that this is not only my biggest comfort but the way I understand and experience the world," she says. "I never feel more like myself than when I'm cooking or eating a meal with people that I love."

Nicoletti's joy at being in her element makes Voracious a feast for body and soul. The book unfolds as a chronological memoir: Nicoletti recalls stories from Hansel and Gretel (Gingerbread Cake with Blood Orange Syrup) to Pride and Prejudice (White Garlic Soup) to Gone Girl (Brown Butter Crepes). But it's her ability to recreate her intimate experience of reading books and their role as her muse that makes Voracious a collection to be savoured.

Though some readers might find a couple of the book's recipes a bit unsavoury — Lord of the Flies / Porchetta di Testa (made from a pig's head) and The Silence of the Lambs / Crostini with Fava Bean and Chicken Liver Mousses — Nicoletti has no regrets about including them.

"Some of the most powerful food themes in literature aren't necessarily the most appealing. That doesn't make them any less powerful. Those two recipes are the ones I hope readers will push themselves to try," Nicoletti says. "As a butcher that works with whole animals, I would love for people to challenge themselves to eat things on an animal that they wouldn't normally eat."

INSPIRED BY A JOAN DIDION ESSAY

"Goodbye to All That" Grilled Peaches with Homemade Ricotta

ILLUSTRATION: MARION BOLOGNESI

Makes 6 filled peach halves

- 3 1/2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 ripe peaches, cut in half and pitted
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Flaky sea salt (such as Maldon), for serving
- Coarsely ground black pepper, for serving

Pour the milk, cream and salt into a large, heavy-bottomed pot and cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the temperature reaches 190°F on a candy thermometer. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the lemon juice. Allow the mixture to sit for 5 to 7 minutes before straining it through a sieve lined with three layers of cheesecloth. Let the cheese drain into a bowl for 1 to 2 hours.

Preheat a grill to medium.

Brush the peaches with the olive oil and dust them lightly with the sugar. Place the peaches, flesh-side down, on the grill and cook until char marks appear, about 2 minutes. Transfer the peach halves to bowls and spoon the fresh ricotta over them. Drizzle the ricotta with olive oil and sprinkle with flaky sea salt and coarse black pepper. Serve immediately.

Excerpted from the book Voracious by Cara Nicoletti. Copyright © 2015 by Cara Nicoletti. Reprinted with permission of Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY. All rights reserved.

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Kim Sung-jin, 14, broadcasts himself eating in his bedroom in Bucheon, south of Seoul, South Korea. JULIE YOON/AP PHOTO

Teens eat their way to Internet fame

WEB CULTURE

Live broadcast site invites strangers in for dinner

Every evening, 14-year-old Kim Sung-jin orders fried chicken, delivery pizza or Chinese food to eat in a small room in his family's home south of Seoul. He gorges on food as he chats before a live camera with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of teenagers watching.

That's the show, and it makes Kim money: two million won ($1,700) in his most successful episode.

Better known to his viewers by the nickname Patoo, he is one of the youngest broadcasters on Afreeca TV, an app for live-broadcasting video online launched in 2006.

Kim, who has a delicate physique and chopstick-like slight limbs, has been broadcasting himself eating almost every evening since he was 11. Sometimes he invites friends to eat with him. To add fun, he once wore a blonde wig and dressed as a woman.

While the Internet has been making stars for years — from bloggers to gamers who play for millions of YouTube viewers — outsiders may find it puzzling, if not outright bizarre, for young people to spend hours watching someone eating. But in South Korea, Afreeca TV has become a big player in the Internet subculture and a crucial part of social life for teens.

Shows like Kim's are known as "Meok Bang," a mash-up Korean word of broadcast and eating. They are the most popular and often most profitable among some 5,000 live shows that are aired live at any given moment on Afreeca TV.

Kim started the show essentially to find someone to eat with. His parents worked in another city so he was living with his grandparents, and they ate dinner so early he got hungry at night.

He says the show made his dining more regular, although most of his meals on Afreeca TV begin after 10 p.m. The show also brought him unexpected joy: He said that even though he's just an ordinary teenager, "people say hello to me on the street."

"I do what I want. That's the perk of a personal broadcast."

Many connect the popularity of Meok Bang to the increasing number of South Koreans who live alone, and to the strong social aspects of food in this society.

There are plenty of other quirky offerings on Afreeca TV. Late at night there is "Sool Bang" — broadcast drinking — in which melancholic South Koreans drink liquor alone discussing their tough lives. Then there is "Study Bang," or broadcast studying: A screen shows the hand of an unidentified person writing notes on a thick book under the light of a desk lamp.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

An audience of 8 million and counting

About 60 per cent of the 8 million unique monthly visitors to Afreeca TV are teens or in their 20s. That means nearly 40 per cent of the 12.5 million South Koreans aged 10 to 30 watch a show on Afreeca TV at least once a month.

"Young generations believe that TV is naturally something like Afreeca TV where they can interact with broadcasters," said Ahn, the company executive. He believes TV in the long run will be completely replaced by such apps.

Cho Young-min, a 12-year-old who has watched an online game show on Afreeca TV since he was a third-grader, aspires to have his own show on Afreeca TV, not on the TV in the living room.

Ahn Won-jun, a 17-year-old high school student, said he prefers to eat dinner in his room to watch Kim's Meok Bang, rather than dining with his parents.

Kim is not a particularly polite virtual dinner guest. He burps loudly before his audiences and sometimes walks off abruptly, announcing with some specificity that he needs to use the bathroom. Hardcore Afreeca TV viewers are drawn to hosts like Kim because they can interact with them, unlike distant TV stars.

Most broadcasters, including Kim, are reluctant to reveal how much money they make. Afreeca TV said out of some 300,000 broadcasters who air their show at least once a month, top 500 make more than what one would normally make by working full time, but the company declined to be more specific. In 2013, a South Korea television network TV Chosun cited a lawmaker's office that the top Afreeca TV host earned 298 million won ($250,000) a year.

Afreeca TV's model may not translate across borders, however. The company's efforts to make inroads in Japan, Taiwan and the U.S. have met with little response. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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A book that will hold you Captive

CLAUDINE DUMONT

Quebec writer finds unlikely source for inspiration

Claudine Dumont is the type of person who makes things happen.

When I catch the Quebec author and photographer by phone, she is covered in drywall dust, constructing the kitchen for Ma Souer et Moi café, a new restaurant in Laval she is opening at the end of the month with her older sister.

The siblings are both high school teachers, a profession Dumont describes as "hard and demanding and not very rewarding."

It was Dumont's own teenage ambition — since she was 14 and first read John Irving — to become a writer.

After 10 years of literature studies, she published her debut novel, Anabiose, in 2013.

She had two dreams for the book, both of which came true. Weeks after its release in French, she was contacted on Facebook by a producer interested in buying the film rights.

The adaptation goes into production early next year.

Dumont also dreamt of an English-language version of the novel: Captive is out now with House of Anansi Press, with a translation by Montreal's David Scott Hamilton.

Captive is challenging to describe without giving away the plot details that make it such an exhilarating read.

Here's what you should know: Emma, a socially isolated office worker with a thirst for tequila, wakes up in a windowless concrete room with only a mattress and a lamp.

She has no clue who put her there, or how she'll escape.

> **"I was leaning toward a bad ending but I think readers deserve candy at the end.**
> Claudine Dumont, author of Captive

Written in clipped, almost breathless sentences and brief chapters, the suspense and physical action is relentless until the bombshell ending (which admittedly may frustrate some readers.)

Dumont began writing the book, which took her about two months, while between teaching contracts.

"I'm not a very social person. I don't like being around a lot of people," she says.

"I like to retreat but the more I retreated, the less I'd see people.

"That isolation that Emma experiences is where I was. I was taking my own reality to an extreme."

She was also inspired by an unlikely source: a passage from A Million Little Pieces, the 2003 memoir that got author James Frey booted out of Oprah's book club when it was discovered that he falsified many of its details.

Dumont was struck by the scene in which Frey is about to enter a rehab centre once again. He thinks that maybe this time it will work, and his life will be better.

Dumont says it made her imagine a rehab centre for people who don't know how to live their lives fully — not necessarily for those with addictions.

As all those elements came together, and even before Dumont started writing the manuscript, she knew exactly how the story would conclude.

Without giving away any spoilers, she teases, "I was leaning toward a bad ending but I think readers deserve candy at the end. That's what I like when I read."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

Captive owes some debt to James Frey's notorious book A Million Little Pieces. HANDOUT

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Claudine Dumont describes her day job , teaching, as "hard" and "not very rewarding." HANDOUT

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

When a former lover forgets you: an NY author spills her heart

Susan Shapiro is used to exposing her heartbreak for the sake of art. She's written 11 books (some memoirs), including one called Five Men Who Broke My Heart, in which she meets up with her five ex-boyfriends High Fidelity-style asking each one what went wrong.

"I spilled all the secrets of my past love, but there was one story I could never tell," Shapiro tells us. "Until now." Shapiro's twelfth book, What's Never Said, is about a poetry student who has an affair with her professor. Years later, she attends a book signing he is giving, anxiously awaiting how he will react to seeing her. Only when he does see her, he doesn't remember who she is.

While the book is fiction, Shapiro says it is based on her own life; those exact events happened to her, though she attests the professor in question did in fact know who she was, he just ignored her. "I freaked out. I literally could not believe it," she says. "Heartbreak is way more interesting to write about than falling in love," Shapiro says.

"It's kind of a funny problem (for me) because I've been extremely happy with the same guy for 25 years ... Luckily he gave me hell early on."

Shapiro, who is a professor at New York University and The New School, encourages her students to use their shameful secrets as writing fuel as well. She regularly assigns her students to write about their most humiliating secret, usually just one class into the semester. "I really don't want to have to wait through 10 weeks of boring assignments," she says. "I want to know who somebody is right away."

The results are astounding. "In my first class, out of 12 people, eight got published and four got $1,000," she says. Some of the past topics range from writing about being secretly gay, turning into a jerk after being sentenced to life in a wheelchair, or dating a man accused of raping a Harvard student. Many of Shapiro's students land book deals and Shapiro talks as excitedly about her students' upcoming published works as her own.

EMILY LAURENCE FOR METRO NEW YORK

Montreal lingerie company plans to tackle sector challenges head-on and expand across Canada. HANDOUT

La Vie en Rose in full bloom at 30

CANADIAN FASHION

Quebec-based retailer marks three decades with new line

As Boutique La Vie en Rose marks its 30th anniversary, the lingerie and swimwear brand has many successes to celebrate at a time when Canada's retail sector has faced significant struggles.

The company inked a deal in March to buy fellow Quebec-based brand Bikini Village. La Vie en Rose planned to keep the insolvent swimwear chain's 48 stores open in Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia with an eye toward expansion across Canada and overseas, while closing four outlet locations in Quebec.

The Montreal-based retailer has already bolstered its global presence with the recent launch of its first La Vie en Rose location in Panama, and discussions to open in India, Indonesia and Nigeria.

This week, the company launched its "Celebrating women for 30 years" capsule collection.

Featuring a striking colour combination of black and blue, the anniversary line has sleek lingerie styles showcasing lace, mesh and lace-up details. Additional looks will be available in September.

Despite its triumphs, La Vie en Rose hasn't been entirely immune from economic pressures, particularly in the face of the nosediving loonie.

"It's a challenge, and I'm sure it's going to be the cherry on the top of the challenge for retailers in Canada," president and CEO Francois Roberge said in a recent phone interview.

"Now we're going to need to change the retail price. For example, maybe instead of selling PJs for Christmas at $24, we're going to put (them) on the market at $29.

"We have no choice. It's about a question of survival."

Canada has seen a growing vacuum in the retail landscape with the departure of U.S. discount giant Target and the closures of Mexx, Boutique Jacob and Smart Set.

Roberge said many Canadian retailers that have folded or are struggling are failing to integrate e-commerce into their business models.

His company has amassed around $5 million in online purchases this year, with e-commerce accounting for three per cent of sales. His goal is to increase that figure to 10 per cent in 2019.

"It's very important to open your mind and to just think of the way that you can turn your stock. That's why the web is part of that strategy."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Jessica Simpson launches line of workout gear

U.S. singer and businesswoman Jessica Simpson is to take on the activewear business.

Her new line of clothing will be called Jessica Simpson The Warm Up, according to Women's Wear Daily.

It's a major expansion of Simpson's brand and represents the first big step since she partnered with Sequential Brands Group last April.

Simpson's commercial endeavors in fashion have spanned the domains of shoes, clothing and perfume, with activewear closing the gap. RELAXNEWS

Blackphone 2 makes mobile privacy a priority

Just as web security issues are front-and-centre following the cheating website Ashley Madison hack, privacy experts Silent Circle have announced the arrival of a Blackphone 2 for September.

The focal point of the Blackphone 2 is once again Silent OS, an Android-based operating system enhanced to address privacy concerns. Silent OS puts privacy in the hands of each individual user, allowing them to create different "Spaces" that act as separate virtual phones on one device, thereby enabling work life and personal life to stay securely compartmentalized. You can create up to four spaces on each phone and customize them any way you like. The cost is still under wraps.

Designed for individuals and corporations alike, the first Blackphone was originally presented at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona back in 2014 before going on sale for $629.

The original had a 4.7-inch screen. RELAXNEWS

Brony as hair muse

From celebrities like Katy Perry, Kelly Osbourne, May Jagger, and Britney Spears, to Instagram fashioniastas like Amanda Joy, the colombré trend — also called "brony hair" — is taking off. ALL PHOTOS INSTAGRAM, SPEARS PHOTO GETTY MAGES

COLOUR

New look inspired by My Little Pony locks

My Little Pony has been around since the '80s, but the toy franchise isn't going out of fashion anytime soon. In fact, it's even kick-started a new celebrity hair trend.

Brony hair (brony originally described male fans of My Little Pony, but the look has been picked up by women) is the latest style to take over Instagram. It involves dying your locks the signature pastels and candy-coloured hues of the toy ponies, often mixing up different shades at the same time.

Britney Spears was sporting the look at this weekend's Teen Choice Awards, where she won the Candie's choice style icon award.

Some stars, like Katy Perry and Kelly Osbourne have been rocking the look for months, while others, such as model Georgia May Jagger, are new to the brony scene. The daughter of Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall took to Instagram earlier this week to unveil her new 'mermazing' look, with a photo showing off her multi-toned green, pink, purple and orange locks.

The U.K. fashionista has kept her roots natural and left sections of her long blond hair uncoloured to keep things choppy.

Cara Delevingne was also spotted with sugary pink hair. It turned out to be a wig — a good idea if you want to test out Brony hair without committing — but her choice shows how hot the trend is right now.

Brony hair could be a natural progression from rainbow hair.

Thanks to celebrities like Kylie Jenner and Kaley Cuoco, graduated ombré styles that involve leaving the roots their natural colour and adding flashes of pastel or fluo tones to the bottom half of your tresses have been big news.

The concept is both fun and practical in terms of regrowth. AFP

GET THE LOOK

How to go colombré

If you're ready to get the dye out, then there are a few tips that might make the process easier. Beauty blogger Irene Mahmud Khan suggests using Garnier Color Styler, a product which only lasts a few washes and is applied by hand for an individual effect. Over at The Faux Theory, the advice is to 'feather' the colour using a downward stroke when applying dye with a brush to avoid any harsh division lines between the colombré and your natural shade. AFP

INTERVIEW

What's in Georgia May Jagger's suitcase?

With summer vacations in full swing, we interviewed British-American model Georgia May Jagger on the staples of her summer wardrobe. The internationally renowned star tells us that a suitcase without a bikini is not an option.

What are your three must-haves on vacation?
A high SPF sunscreen, my camera and a good book.

What wardrobe item do you always bring along?
For summer: bikinis. I buy a new one every time I go on a beach vacation.

How about accessories?
My engraved Love Bridge bracelets. For summer, I particularly like disc bracelets in blue and turquoise that you can have personalized with engraved dates or initials — very romantic.

Vacation beauty tip?
Wear as little makeup as possible. I like the minimalist style when I'm on vacation. But I do like to wear a little gold eye shadow at night.

Do you have an unusual story from a past vacation?
I just went to Cambodia and was really impressed by Siem Reap and the temple of Angkor Wat/UNESCO World Heritage. This was really an amazing vacation.

Who do you dream of going on vacation with?
(Smiling broadly) My boyfriend. AFP

Georgia May Jagger is the face of jeweler Thomas Sabo's new campaign. ©THOMAS SABO

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GOSSIP BRIEFS

Twilight saga over

We live in an age of reboots and remakes, and movie studios are big fans of making money, so it makes sense that we should be worried about someone relaunching the Twilight series. And Kristen Stewart is apparently all for it — as long as she doesn't have to be in them.

"I was so genuinely, heavily entrenched in that," she tells Uproxx. "It's hard to speak to a five-year period in a few sentences, but I loved doing it. But that doesn't mean I want to keep doing it."

NED EHRBAR/METRO

Payne explains

One Direction fans can apparently be a finicky bunch. Case in point: Liam Payne recently introduced a song, Girl Almighty, at a concert with what he thought was an amusing observation.

"This is my favourite song off the last album, and it is about trying to find that No. 1 woman of your life, which none of you can relate to, 'cause most of you are girls," he said.

Fans on Twitter took Payne to task for disregarding same-sex couples. "I am in no way shape or form homophobic," Payne responded.

NED EHRBAR/METRO

DIVORCE

Fox and Green over

IN HOLLYWOOD

Ned Ehrbar

This one is kind of a bummer: Apparently one of the coolest married couples in Hollywood is no longer actually a couple.

Megan Fox and husband Brian Austin Green have reportedly split up — and they did it a while ago.

"Megan has separated from Brian," a source tells Us Weekly. "They decided on it six months ago."

Fox and Green have been together for 11 years and married for five. They have two children together — Noah, 2, and Bodhi, 18 months — in addition to Green's 13-year-old son, Kassius, from a previous relationship. They were last spotted in public together on June 9.

HEALTH CARE

Doherty cancer diagnosis

Shannen Doherty is battling breast cancer that worsened during a lapse in her health insurance caused by her former business managers, the actress claimed in a lawsuit filed Wednesday.

The former Beverly Hills, 90210 star claims that her former business managers and accountants mismanaged her money and allowed her health insurance to lapse last year. Because of that, she said she didn't go to the doctor until she had insurance and there was a delay in diagnosing her cancer, which will likely require more drastic treatments, including a possible mastectomy and chemotherapy.

Doherty, 44, received the diagnosis in March and her doctors have said earlier treatment might have stopped its spread, the lawsuit states.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

O'Donnell's daughter found safe and sound

CHELSEA O'DONNELL

Teen missing since Aug. 11 found hiding in New Jersey

Rosie O'Donnell and daughter Chelsea in 2010. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ALL OTHER PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Rosie O'Donnell's teenage daughter was "of sound mind and body" when she was found in New Jersey after she left home for a week, police in New York said Wednesday.

Sgt. Daniel Wilson said Chelsea O'Donnell was found by South Nyack police a day earlier in Barnegat, N.J., at the house of a male she was "recently acquainted with." He didn't describe the relationship.

Chelsea declined medical attention, and "she did not appear to be in any mental distress," he said.

She had left the family's home Aug. 11 with a therapy dog, and her mother's concern was intensified because she had not been taking needed medication. Chelsea suffers from mental illness, according to her mother's spokeswoman, Cindi Berger.

Rosie O'Donnell lives in South Nyack, about 40 kilometres north of New York City, and police there had been involved in searching for Chelsea since Aug. 16. In the interim, Chelsea made contact with third parties, so police "didn't believe that there was any immediate danger," Wilson said.

South Nyack police informed Barnegat police on Tuesday that they believed Chelsea was there. Police went to the residence and although the person answering the door initially did not want to reveal Chelsea's presence, police said they would not leave until she came out. She then appeared and willingly left with police.

Wilson said Rosie O'Donnell was co-operative and involved authorities because "several days had gone by and she wanted her daughter back."

O'Donnell also issued a statement and tweeted Tuesday that her daughter was missing, appealing to the public for help. "It has been a difficult road for Chelsea and her family and they just want her back safe," Berger had said.

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metro HOME
Your essential daily news
Thursday, August 20, 2015

What they're a$king

With the cost of single-family homes on the rise in Canada, the townhome is an economical alternative to first-time purchasers looking to get into the market, while offering more living space than a conventional condo. Check out this great selection of newer and brand new, two-bedroom townhomes. **Duncan McAllister** FOR METRO

ASKING PRICES WERE ACCURATE AT TIME OF PUBLISHING.

$294,900

Calgary

Here's a townhome at 177 Rainbow Falls Manor, located in Chestermere, just east of Calgary. The open floor plan offers a spacious living room, dining area and ample kitchen. The main floor also has a two-piece bathroom. The upper level offers a loft, a four-piece bath and two large bedrooms. The lower level is fully-finished with a family room, a two-piece bath, laundry room and storage area. The property is close to walking paths, schools, shopping and other amenities. Listing agent Tim Lind is a sales representative for RE/Max Real Estate, Mountainview, 403-333-0837.

$279,900

Halifax

Here's a new townhome at Waterberry Park in Bedford, N.S. Amara Developments is offering a two-bedroom design that's ready for move-in. The units feature detailed exterior elements, in brick, stone and wood, and are finished with hard-surface flooring and stone countertops. The main floor has oversized windows and nine-foot ceilings. There's a top-floor laundry and a two-toned, hardwood staircase throughout the home. Listing agent Jeff Kielbratowski is a sales representative with Royal LePage Atlantic Realty, 902-877-1787.

$399,900

Winnipeg

Located in the Royalwood neighbourhood, this open-concept, executive-style condo townhome was built in 2014. The unit features an open-style great room with large windows, a large kitchen with stainless steel appliances and granite counters, maple hardwood floors and patio doors leading out to a large, sunny deck. The master bedroom has a walk-in closet and ensuite bath, and a second bedroom with full bath and walk-in shower. Listing agent Dave Heinrichs is a sales representative with Royal LePage Dynamic Real Estate, 204-479-9222.

$298,000

Ottawa

For sale is this stacked condo townhome in Elmvale Acres, with 1,012 sq. ft. of open-concept living space. The corner unit has lots of upgrades including hardwood on the main floor, custom blinds, granite countertops, a breakfast bar and appliances. There are two bedrooms on the lower level and a balcony off the living room. The unit is located close to downtown, transit, shopping and hospitals, with parking right outside the door. Listing agent Kerry Millican is a sales representative with Royal LePage Team Realty, 613-290-2990.

$709,000

Vancouver

This new, two-bedroom unit in the Kitchener Mews is one of 10 new townhouses built by a premier Vancouver builder. The unit features 1,000 sq. ft. of living space, and listing agent Dale Mounzer says that the homes boast solid construction and well-designed living spaces, situated in one of the city's most sought-after areas. Just 10 minutes from the downtown core, the property boasts a walk score of 98. All homes include secure, underground parking and storage lockers. Mounzer is an associate with Macdonald Realty Ltd., 604-689-5115.

$289,800

Toronto

Here's an open-concept design with a modern layout, located in the east-end neighborhood of Victoria Village. The two-bedroom townhome has extra-high ceilings, a split-bedroom layout, a large kitchen and front terrace with barbecue area. Listing agent Ira Jelenik says that thousands have been spent on upgrades, including floors and appliances. The unit is located in a family-friendly neighborhood close to transit, shopping, schools and parks. Jelenik is an associate with Harvey Kalles Real Estate Ltd., 416-441-2888.

$389,800

Edmonton

This three-storey townhome in the Serenity Gardens community is a modern, 1,539-sq-ft. unit with two bedrooms, a den and a loft. The home features espresso-coloured hardwood flooring on the main level, dark wood cabinetry, a kitchen island with an eating area and stainless steel appliances, which are all included, as well as a gas barbecue hookup. The property is in an excellent location in Pleasantview, minutes to Southgate, the university, and downtown. Listed by Darlene Strang, an associate broker with RE/Max Real Estate, 780-908-3131.

METRO SPACES

Nestle your home office into a nook

Freelance writer Andrea Janus converted a compact space in her one-bedroom apartment to fit a desk, chair and other necessities for her home office. TIM FRASER/FOR METRO

One of the best pieces of advice I received when I decided to quit my full-time job for the freelance life was to have a dedicated workspace. Don't just clear laptop room on the kitchen table or, worse, the couch, I was told.

The problem is, my one-bedroom apartment may be spacious, but it doesn't include a separate room for a home office. So where was I going to squeeze a desk, chair and other office necessities?

"You can think outside the box a little bit," Laura Stein, principal at Laura Stein Interiors, says of setting up a home office. "You don't have to have a full extra room. There are a lot of little places that you can find a spot to nestle into."

I took the opportunity to rethink the entire room, which I had been unhappy with since I had moved into my apartment nearly four years ago. I had always wanted white, glossy bookshelves rather than the dark, brown ones I bought. When I found that Ikea sold a glossy white desk top (yes, you can buy desk tops separately and then choose from a variety of different legs), that sealed the deal.

Not only do I now have a functional space in which to work, but moving the couch, shelves and entertainment system closer together made my living room a lot more cosy.

While I found space along a living room wall, Stein suggests clients consider "those little unused niches in your home." Space under a staircase can be an ideal nook for an office, or a corner that's been created by something along a wall, like duct work or a radiator.

The key to carving out a corner for work is lighting, Stein says. If your office can't be in a room with natural light, ensure there is an electrical outlet nearby so you aren't toiling in the dark.

"You don't want to put yourself in a little dark corner of your basement if you're going to be down there every day," Stein says. "I firmly believe you'll be far more productive if you like the space that you're working in."

– Andrea Janus

CONTRIBUTED

RELAX CLOSER TO HOME

When it comes to recreation, young families juggling work and family responsibilities are finding relaxation close to home.

"The low Canadian dollar is putting a damper on many Calgarians' vacation plans," says Don Stengler, project manager of CottageClub Ghost Lake, a recreational community just 35 minutes west of Calgary. "Many people, particularly young families, and now even snowbirds, are finding great alternatives nearby."

CottageClub is a year-round recreational getaway in a Rocky Mountain lakeside setting. Its abundant amenities include a freshwater lake, private beach, boat launch, green space and trails, and resident's recreation centre.

Builder Cenova Homes recently opened its unique and innovative show home at CottageClub. The "Cascade Creek" is full of cottage charm and has modern features, including 16-foot vaulted ceilings, expansive windows, gourmet kitchen with stainless designer appliances, hidden loft and authentic wood burning fireplace. Lot and cottage start at $319,000 plus GST.

Cenova Homes brings 20 years experience in building high-end contemporary residences in inner city Calgary to CottageClub. It offers everything from affordable, small footprint cottages to two-storey, three-bedroom customizable designs.

Cenova builds year-round in only four to six months, so buyers can enjoy everything that CottageClub has to offer without the wait. From lot purchase through financing, design, landscaping, and even furnishing, Cenova offers turnkey customer service matching your vision with its history for high quality and exceptional value in an investment you can enjoy today while building a legacy for your family in the future. For more information, visit cottageclub.ca or call 403-214-0292.

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FIND YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

PARK POINT HOMES WILL ADAPT TO YOUR LIFESTYLE

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Homes have always been designed to adapt to their owners. In the 1950s, when cars proliferated, so did garages. In the '90s, Internet access became a must-have. Now another trend is shaping the way living spaces are designed — more people are working from home.

"There's a new breed of homebuyer out there," says Parham Mahboubi, vice-president of planning and marketing for Calgary homebuilder Qualex-Landmark™. "Many people are starting their own businesses or telecommuting. We're seeing so many buyers now who want homes that will adapt to a live-work lifestyle."

The company's live-work townhomes at Park Point, a new collection of homes in the heart of downtown Calgary, are a testament to the trend.

More than 2.7 million Canadians are self-employed and more than 1.1 million Canadians work from home, according to Statistics Canada. That's a lot of Canadians who need a space that will suit their work life just as much as their home life.

"The live-work units at Park Point are quite relevant to people, particularly millennials, who freelance and want to have flexible lives and live right downtown close to everything," Mahboubi says.

Park Point, located in the heart of Calgary's Beltline, features eight street-level live-work townhomes, designed with flexibility at their core.

"There's a huge variety of jobs you can do from home now — whether you're an artist or an accountant — so we wanted to make sure we designed our live-work homes with lots of flexibility," Mahboubi says, adding that the ability "to literally walk downstairs and be at work" increases productivity.

The live-work zoned townhomes provide a comfortable setting for residents to work and live in Calgary's rapidly evolving, amenity rich, centralized and diverse urban city centre. Geared toward a wide range of uses, these homes also offer street-level frontage and signage opportunities and intermingle seamlessly with Park Point's residential tower.

"We envision residents setting up a private office on the second floor of the live-work unit," says Mohammed Esfahani, president of Qualex-Landmark. "These work spaces will look out onto Central Memorial Park and/or will open onto a private patio and communal landscaped courtyard on the third floor."

Park Point's uniquely designed, 34-storey, mixed-use residential tower consists of 289 homes. Buyers have a choice of one, two and three bedrooms (plus den/flex), street level live-work townhomes and penthouses.

All live-work townhomes at Park Point feature two bedrooms on the upper floor, two bathrooms and a spacious patio for outdoor living with spectacular views of Calgary's urban centre. Prices for the live-work townhomes start from the $680,000s.

For more, visitqualex.ca/parkpoint.

Customize your own schedule

CONTRIBUTED

A surrounding neighbourhood is as integral to the live-work aspect as the homes themselves.

"Living in the city centre at Park Point will give our live-work residents the perfect lifestyle balance," says Parham Mahboubi, vice-president of planning and marketing for Calgary homebuilder Qualex-Landmark™. "The walkability here is incredible. With a walk score that classifies Park Point as a 'walker's paradise,' the homes here are great for anyone who is looking to work from home. You don't need to go far to access the amenities you'll need."

Home offices at Park Point will be comfortable, quiet and stress-free. No commuting will save residents major time and money — no need for a car or the maintenance, gas and parking costs that come with it. The Park Point lifestyle was designed to enhance residents' quality of life.

"Our live-work townhomes will give residents more time to spend on their lives, with their friends, and with their families," Mahboubi says. "They can customize their own schedules."

The surrounding neighbourhood gives residents a wide variety of restaurants, cafés, services, entertainment and green space at their doorstep. Beautiful and historic Central Memorial Park is across the street, and the Glenbow Museum is just a couple blocks walk away — these are just two among many gems of downtown Calgary that residents can enjoy.

SOLID INVESTMENT

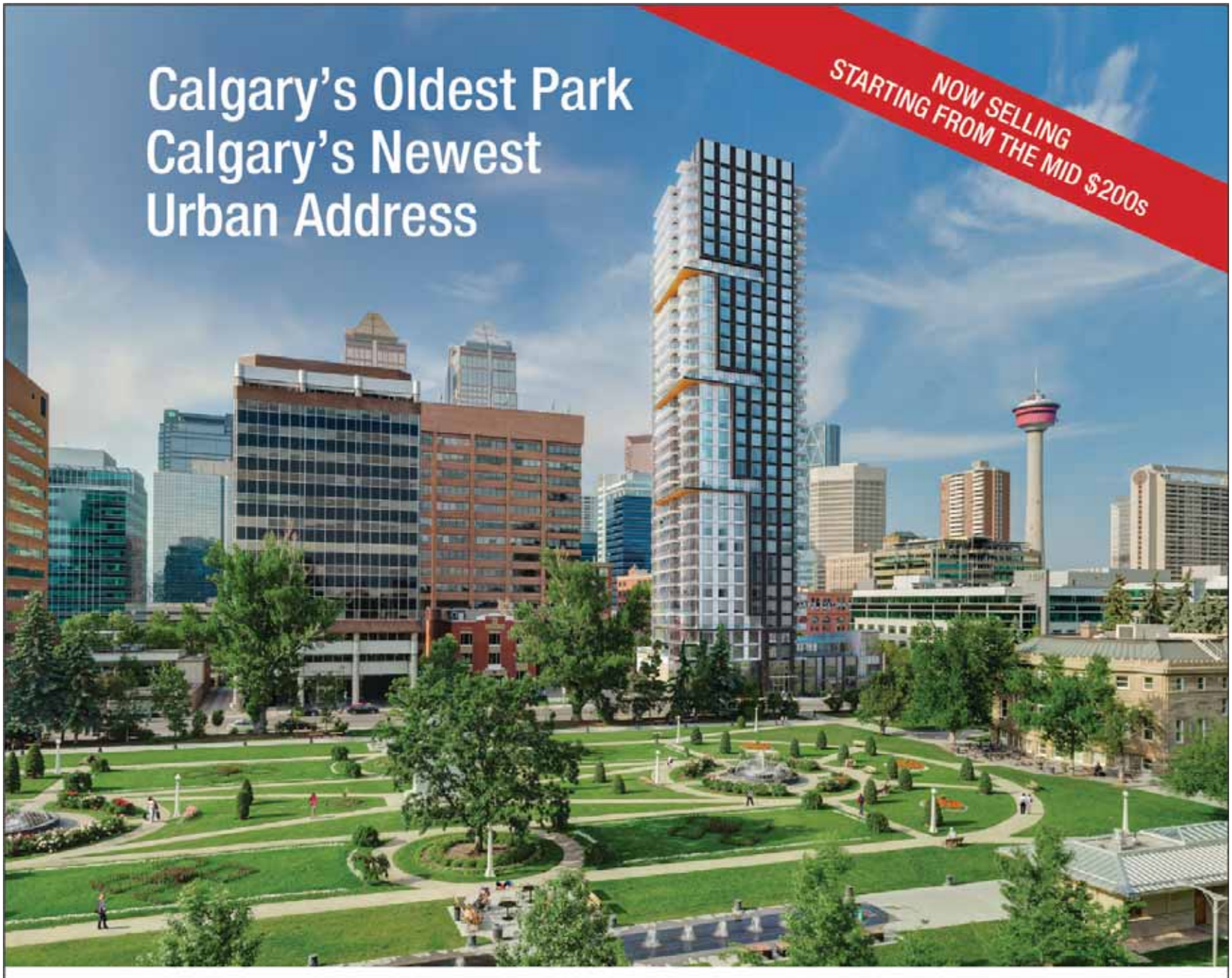
Live-work homes are increasing in popularity, not just for their convenience, but also for their financial benefits.

Entrepreneurs who work from home can write off some of their business expenses on their tax returns — a major bonus of a home office.

Another financial bonus is the benefit of buying a home for its greater potential resale value — Park Point's live-work townhomes are flexible for many more uses and, therefore, will be potentially in more demand than a normal condo.

"It's a sound investment that gives a homebuyer greater latitude on the use, especially if they want to sell their suite in the future," says Parham Mahboubi, vice-president of planning and marketing for Qualex-Landmark™.

Visit the Park Point discovery centre at 301 11th Ave. S.W., one block north of Central Memorial Park (corner of 11th Avenue and 2nd Street S.W.). The centre is open daily from noon to 5 p.m., but is closed Fridays. For more, visit qualex.ca/parkpoint or call 403-244-2425.



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THE ART OF LIVING SMALL

CONTRIBUTED

Whether you are just starting out or getting ready to gear down, Attainable Homes' brand new one-bedroom condos in Glenbrook Park offer big value in a small package.

There are a number of reasons smaller spaces make sense to a prospective homebuyer. Young adults keen on grabbing their first rung on the real estate ladder. Empty nesters looking to travel more and entertain less. Urban professionals having too much fun to settle into suburban life with 2.5 kids and a golden retriever.

For those looking to do more with less — and spend less in the process — Calgary-owned Attainable Homes may have just the ticket. Its latest one-bedroom condos are conveniently located in the vibrant southwest community of Glenbrook Park.

"Not all of us can afford large spaces in a city the size of Calgary," says Attainable Homes sales and marketing manager Tara Cooney. "They're expensive, even in the best of economies. We find more and more people are looking to live more minimalist lifestyles — less clutter, lower mortgages, more money to do the things they want to do. We provide a perfect solution for this type of homebuyer."

Through its attainable home ownership program, this city-owned non-profit provides ownership assistance for Calgarians caught between pricey rentals and ever-climbing home prices. Its ongoing alliance with developer Truman Homes (three-time Customer Choice award winner for highest customer satisfaction) results in stunning homes that are exceptionally designed, attainably priced, and located in coveted, well-appointed communities like Glenbrook Park.

"By partnering with progressive builders like Truman Homes, we're able to come up with really versatile solutions for smaller spaces," Cooney says. "Clean lines, uncluttered design elements, high ceilings, ample natural light … all of these variables come together to give our bargain-priced one-bedroom units a contemporary, elegant cosiness."

Due to the softening economy, coupled with Calgary's high cost of renting, Attainable Homes has seen a steady increase in traffic, both to its sales centre at 1010–6th Ave., S.W., as well as its website, AttainYourHome.com.

Attainable Homes' one-bedroom units in Glenbrook Park average 600 square feet and are priced at about $256,500. An average mortgage payment would be in the neighbourhood of $1,100, a compelling figure considering what many Calgarians throw at rent each month.

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Are you struck with wonder by the amazing show of nature as the sun slips below the horizon and the call of the loons echoes across the water.

They remind you that fall will soon be here. It will soon be time to leave behind that oh-so-perfect campsite to park the RV for the winter, pull the boat out of the water, or lock up the cabin.

Summer is almost gone. And what a summer it has been. Having kids, grandkids and cousins for sleepovers. Sharing late night conversation and laughter while enjoying a glass of wine long after the kids have drifted off to dreamland. Summer living in the great outdoors builds a lifetime of memories with family and friends.

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"We aren't in the business of selling mattresses," says Charlie Gouldsborough, owner of Simmon's Mattress Gallery. "There are no gimmicks here. We're here first and foremost to make sure our customers get a great night's sleep."

The store's knowledgeable staff help visitors find the perfect mattress depending on two basic factors — level of support and level of comfort.

The level of support will determine what kind of spring or foam core their mattress has. This depends on an individual's size, weight, whether they will be sharing the bed with a partner, and other needs. The level of comfort can be controlled by the padding and linens placed on top of the mattress.

CONTRIBUTED

"We spend time with the customer and listen to what their needs are, whether they're looking for their child's first bed, a guest bed, or a bed for their master bedroom," Gouldsborough says.

The 16-year-old, independently family-run company provides end-to-end service to provide a great, easy and fast experience for customers, from the selection process to the moving and home set-up.

"We simplify and streamline the bed-buying process for our customers," he says.

Simmons Mattress Gallery is located at 7145 11 St., S.E. in Calgary. For more information, visit simmonsmattress.gallery.

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Patience is key in back-to-school sale

PLANNING

Set up a budget before your expenses get out of control

Izabela Szydlo
For Metro

September may be the most wonderful time of the year for parents, but it can also take a bite out of a household budget. That's why planning before you navigate the aisles of pencils, calculators and backpacks in the coming weeks is essential.

"It's important to set a budget so you don't go out of control when you see all the goodies in stores that are 'nice to have' but not 'needs to have,'" says Judy Arnall, author of the book Parenting With Patience.

In a 2014 back-to-school shopping survey, global consulting firm Accenture found that nearly half of respondents reported they would spend $500 or more on back-to-school expenses. Arnall says when you factor in clothes and electronics, that sounds right. But there are tricks to reducing costs. One involves the old adage "less is more" during the initial back-to-school rush.

"Sales are actually better in the third week of September when the stores need to clear out supplies," she says. "(At that point) don't only buy for this year, but stock up. Kids run out of supplies in January or just lose them, so you want to have extras at home."

When it comes to electronics, however, sales happen during August and Christmas so grab what your child needs now, says the Calgary parenting expert. But keep in mind that a sale doesn't make items "needs to have."

"Really evaluate whether a child needs electronics," says Arnall. "A child doesn't need a cell phone until junior high school and is apt to drop or lose a tablet. Check with the teacher first if those items are mandatory for educational purposes."

THEIR CHOICE

If your child wants a "nice to have" item, Arnall suggests getting him involved in the purchase. "If a backpack or coat is just fine for another year and your child wants a new one, dig into their birthday money or summer earnings to buy it. Or, give them a budget and let them decide where the priorities are. Don't bail them out when they make mistakes."

Research electronics before you head to the store and leave your kids at home when you go to purchase them, suggests Arnall. But for the majority of items, your kid should be tagging along.

"Bring the children for clothing and school supply purchases," says Arnall. "Everything comes with designs on it and if they think what you bought is geeky, they absolutely won't use it."

In 2014, global consulting firm Accenture found that nearly half of respondents reported they would spend $500 or more on back-to-school expenses. SHUTTERSTOCK

School time for P.E. important in Canada

Jennifer Taplin
For Metro

Like math class, physical education is a problem solver.

In an age of childhood obesity, committing serious school time to physical activity seems to be a no-brainer.

All provinces and territories have P.E. curriculums, but they are vastly different, said Allana LeBlanc, physical activity expert with ParticipACTION, a national non-profit dedicated to helping Canadians get and stay active.

"Only Manitoba requires a P.E. credit every year in high school," she said. "We don't have a lot of in-school monitoring, so even if P.E. class is scheduled daily, it's hard to know if it's being implemented effectively."

LeBlanc also noted that there was a 57 per cent increase (from 2006-2011) of school administrators reporting their school had a fully implemented P.E. policy. In Ontario, 45 per cent of elementary schools have P.E. specialists, while all elementary schools in New Brunswick have them on staff.

"P.E. class is important in high school because it's among adolescents that we see the largest drop in overall physical activity levels," Leblanc said.

The percentage of schools in Canada that report providing the recommended level of 150 minutes of physical education per week varies between 8 and 65 per cent. SHUTTERSTOCK

For example, according to ParticipACTION, 15 per cent of 5- to 11-year-olds in Canada are meeting guidelines of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity, but only 5 per cent of 12- to 17-year-olds are meeting those guidelines.

"Activity habits also tend to track through to adulthood, so active teens are generally more active adults. The high school years are a key time to encourage regular physical activity."

If parents feel students aren't getting enough P.E. in school, what can they do?

Parents can encourage their children to join sports teams and clubs, LeBlanc said.

"Parents can also remember that they are their kids' most important role model and engage in physical activity themselves," LeBlanc added.

"Only 15 per cent of adults are meeting Canadian physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity."

It is estimated that only 22 per cent of Canadian children receive physical education at school every day.

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Leave a small lunch footprint

Tanya Enberg
For Metro

If you have children heading back to school, it's time to prepare for all of those litterless lunches ahead.

The litterless lunch is exactly that — no garbage shall be left behind. In other words, everything your child brings to school with them — from juice boxes, snack bags and napkins to apple cores and banana peels — will return home with them at the end of the day.

With this in mind, stocking up on smart, reusable, eco-minded supplies designed to keep food fresh and safe, while being easy to clean and store, is a top priority for parents.

"Litterless lunch programs in schools mean they bring all the mess home with them," says Elena Delli Pizzi, category manager at Staples Canada.

And that could get very messy.

"Everything must be washable," she stresses.

"Reusable lunch containers, water bottles and cutlery are convenient because they can be placed in the dishwasher and are eco-friendly."

To create successful waste-free lunches, write a list of items you will need before shopping. This may also include reusable cutlery, washable napkins and an insulated lunch bag that is easy to wipe down to eliminate bacteria.

The growing popularity of welcoming waste-free lunches in schools and daycares across Alberta is steering caregivers away from pre-packaged foods, further reducing excessive packaging, while providing fresher, healthier meal alternatives for youngsters.

"All of our lunch bags are fully insulated so they keep food cold, and we offer an assortment of hard and soft ice packs as well as ice mats," says Delli Pizzi of the importance of safely storing food for several hours before the lunch bell rings.

Look for dishwasher safe, BPA-free and leak-proof containers.

Plastic is popular because it tends to be light, helping minimize excessive backpack cargo. Stainless steel containers are also a top choice as they are durable, food safe and lightweight.

Always look for high quality containers with lids that snap shut securely for an airtight seal to keep food fresh and safe, while preventing annoying spills, and choose a variety of sizes and styles.

Smaller containers are great for side dishes of fruit, veggies and sauces, and larger ones ideal for mains, such as sandwiches, salads and pasta. Bento box styles keep food nicely separated in one compact compartment for happy-kid lunching.

Clockwise from top left, Skip Hop Zoo Lunchie Set, under $34 at Overstocked.com; Crocodile Creek's Vehicles pack-and-go lunch box, $19.99, at Indigo.ca; T-Rex sandwich keeper and food container, $6.99, at Indigo.ca; Crocodile Creek's 400 ml Robot drinking bottle, $11.99, at Indigo.ca; Insulated Hearts Lunchbox, $11.95 from Children's Place; Animal Lunch Pack, $17, from MEC; Aladdin Collapsible Bowl Set, $23 at MEC; Juice in the Box, $12.98 at Staples.

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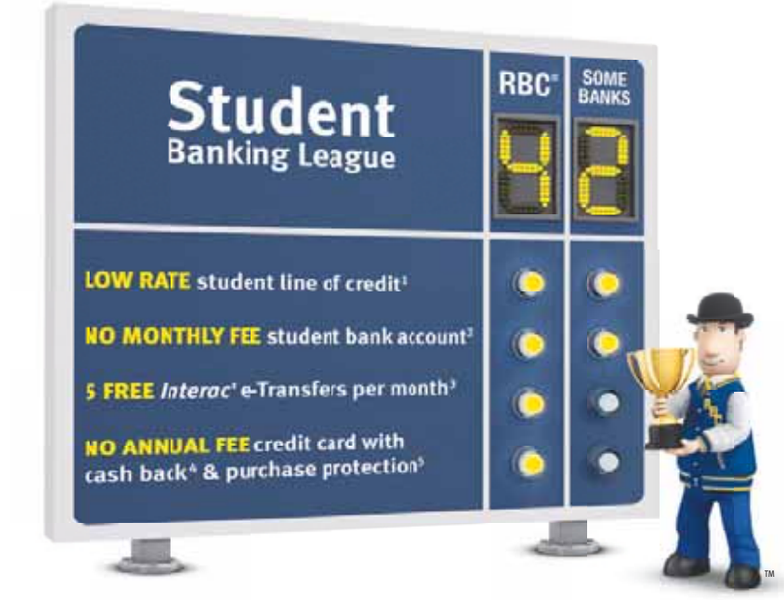
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Priority one: the trusty backpack

Top, from left, Crosshatch and Navy by Herschel Supply Company Ltd, $49.99, at Indigo.ca; Monster High and Avengers backpacks, $14.97 with Matching lunch bags, $9.97, at Walmart; Burton Youth Gromlet backpack, $37 from MEC. Bottom, Backpack Butterfly by Crocodile Creek, $29.99, at Indigo.ca.

Tanya Enberg
For Metro

Soon kids will be saying goodbye to sunshiny days spent splashing at the pool as back-to-school season approaches — and that means it's time to get your child's gear in order.

One essential item guaranteed to get a lot of use is the trusty backpack.

From exposure to sloppy weather conditions and spills to being overstuffed with books, gym clothes, food and laptops, nevermind getting shoved into lockers, cubbies or tossed aside on the playground, backpacks need to withstand major daily stress.

Thankfully finding a durable, well-engineered backpack that reflects your child's personality is easier than ever.

Before making a decision, here are a few helpful tips to consider.

What to inspect

Check the quality of zippers, pockets, buckles, look for tightly stitched seams and make sure the spine provides cushioned support.

"Look for padded shoulder straps and a vertically adjustable sternum strap," says Jodi Weir, technical product developer with Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC).

"The sternum strap, along with the shoulder straps, help distribute weight across the chest. The sternum strap also keeps the shoulder straps in place, which means less pressure on shoulder joints. The pack should fit snug against the back. Of course kids will readjust as they wish. I see a lot of loose fitting backpacks at the end of a school day because sometimes fitting in trumps a good fit."

Size and fit

Where backpacks are concerned, choosing the right size is essential.

"The biggest mistake I see is backpacks that are too big," says Weir. "I would recommend choosing a backpack that fits your child now, instead of buying a pack that you expect your child will grow into."

Extra pockets keep smaller items, such as phones, pens and music players separate and accessible, and side pockets are great for storing water bottles.

Most experts agree that kids shouldn't carry more than 10 to 12 per cent of their body weight. Using the main compartment to store heavier items such as laptops and books helps distribute the weight evenly, causing less strain on the back.

"Although it's not always possible, we recommend placing heavier items in the middle of the backpack instead of at the bottom or top," says Weir.

It is smart to select backpacks in person to test for proper fit and make sure it's spacious enough to hold all of the necessary supplies.

Material

Synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon are more water resistant than natural fibres.

Backpacks can quickly get overloaded, so choosing a lightweight material is ideal. While a leather backpack may look stellar, it may not be the most practical choice.

Fall 2015 trends

From Frozen, Minions to Spider-Man and Star Wars, pop culture is the leading influence appearing on backpacks for younger children this fall, says Elena Delli Pizzi, category manager at Staples Canada.

For older students "bright colours and neons have carried over from last year, as well as camouflage, which is still huge," she says.

Some fresh new cool trends are also popping up, including "geometrics — lines and shapes in various colours — Navajo or Aztec-inspired prints for girls, graffiti style, polka dots and ombre."

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2014 third-overall pick Joel Embiid is expected to miss a second straight season after foot surgery

IN BRIEF

Sailing body won't test Rio Olympic waters for viruses until WHO says necessary

Sailing's world governing body said Saturday it does not plan to conduct viral testing in Rio de Janeiro's polluted Guanabara Bay, the venue for sailing and wind surfing at next year's Olympics.

Dr. Nebojsa Nikolic, top medical official for the International Sailing Federation, told The Associated Press "we will certainly not do this" until the World Health Organization comes out with what he called a "firm statement."

The issue of increased testing for Rio's polluted waterways has drawn attention since an independent five-month analysis by the Associated Press published July 30 showed dangerously high levels of viruses from human sewage at all Rio Olympic water venues. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spurs legend Duncan wins Twyman-Stokes award

San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan has been named the Twyman-Stokes Award winner given annually to the NBA's teammate of the year.

A panel of NBA stars from the past nominated a panel of six candidates. Then nearly 300 active players voted for the winner.

Duncan received 72 first-place votes. Vince Carter of the Memphis Grizzlies finished second and Atlanta's Elton Brand finished third. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Carpenter in as rugby captain for USA Test

Aaron Carpenter will serve as Canadian team captain for Saturday's Test match against the U.S. at Twin Elm Rugby Park in Ottawa.

He'll handle duties from the No. 8 spot in Tyler Ardron's absence. Carpenter, Hubert Buydens, John Moonlight and Harry Jones are the only other players to keep their spot in coach Kieran Crowley's lineup after Canada's recent 15-13 loss to the Americans in their final Pacific Nations Cup game.

Gordon McRorie is back at scrum-half after missing the U.S. game due to injury. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rookies lead Phillies' charge over Blue Jays

MLB

Reports say Philadelphia to deal Utley to L.A. Dodgers

With veteran Chase Utley likely the latest former star headed out of Philadelphia as the team rebuilds, it was a couple of rookies who lifted the Phillies to a victory Wednesday night.

Aaron Altherr homered, doubled and drove in three runs and fellow rookie Adam Morgan pitched seven strong innings and Philadelphia beat the Toronto Blue Jays 7-4.

Jeff Francoeur and Andres Blanco also homered for Philadelphia, which snapped a four-game losing streak.

"It was awesome" Altherr said. "It was good to be out there and get that first hit out of the way. I hope I can just keep producing up here and helping the team win."

Two people familiar with the deal say the Phillies have agreed to trade the six-time all-star second baseman to the Los Angeles Dodgers. Both sources spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Wednesday night because the deal hasn't been finalized and is pending a review of Utley's medical records. Utley has a history of knee injuries and recently returned from the disabled list after missing more than a month because of an ankle injury.

Utley has a hit in eight straight games while batting .484 since coming off the disabled list on Aug. 7. He received a standing ovation after celebrating on the field after the game and doffed his hat in appreciation.

After trading Cole Hamels at the July deadline and Jimmy Rollins last off-season, only Ryan Howard and Carlos Ruiz remain from Philadelphia's 2008 championship team.

Edwin Encarnacion homered for the wild-card leading Blue Jays, who fell two games behind the first-place New York Yankees in the AL East. Toronto lost for just the fourth time in its last 20 games.

"It's a logjam right now," Blue Jays manager John Gibbons said. "We've got to get back in it. Somebody else could, also. It's good baseball."

Mark Buehrle (13-6) had his shortest outing of the season, giving up four runs and seven hits in four innings. Since May 29, Buehrle hadn't allowed more than three earned runs in his last 13 starts while going at least seven innings in 11 of those games.

Buehrle, though, felt he pitched well.

"I wish I could have a lot of these nights," he said. "My location was good. I thought my stuff was better than my last four outings. Just bad luck. I had a bad start, but I was making my pitches." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Catcher Russell Martin loses the ball trying to tag Odubel Herrera during Wednesday night's 7-4 loss in Philadelphia. DREW HALLOWELL/GETTY IMAGES

WEDNESDAY **In Philly**

7	4
PHILLIES	BLUE JAYS

NFL

Judge says Brady's suspension could be scrapped

Tom Brady might have reason to practice more intensely after a federal judge made clear Wednesday that the NFL's four-game suspension of the New England Patriots quarterback over "Deflategate" is in jeopardy.

U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman, who's been asked by NFL Players Association to void the suspension, warned a league lawyer during oral arguments that there was precedent for judges to toss out penalties issued by arbitrators in the scandal over underinflated footballs.

Berman continued to push for a settlement in the dispute — a potential result he called "rational and logical." But throughout the hearing, he also cited several weaknesses in the way the NFL handled the controversy that could become the basis for handing a victory to Brady.

After the hearing, Berman met behind closed doors with both sides for more than an hour before the lawyers left court, saying the judge asked them not to discuss the negotiations publicly. If there is no deal, the Manhattan judge has said he hopes to rule by Sept. 4, six days before the Patriots host the Pittsburgh Steelers in the NFL's season-opening game.

Neither Brady nor NFL commissioner Roger Goodell was in court Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DISPUTE

Berman questioned Goodell's defence of the Brady punishment on the grounds that it was comparable to penalties on players caught using PEDs.

New England's Tom Brady STEVE HELBER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RECIPE Grilled Chicken with Corn Salsa

EAT LIGHT AT HOME

Rose Reisman
rosereisman.com
@rosereisman

Ready in
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Serves 6

Ingredients
- 1/2 cup barbecue sauce
- 3 Tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp molasses
- 1/4 tsp hot pepper sauce
- 1 1/2 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 cup canned corn kernels, drained
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 3 Tbsp chopped cilantro or parsley

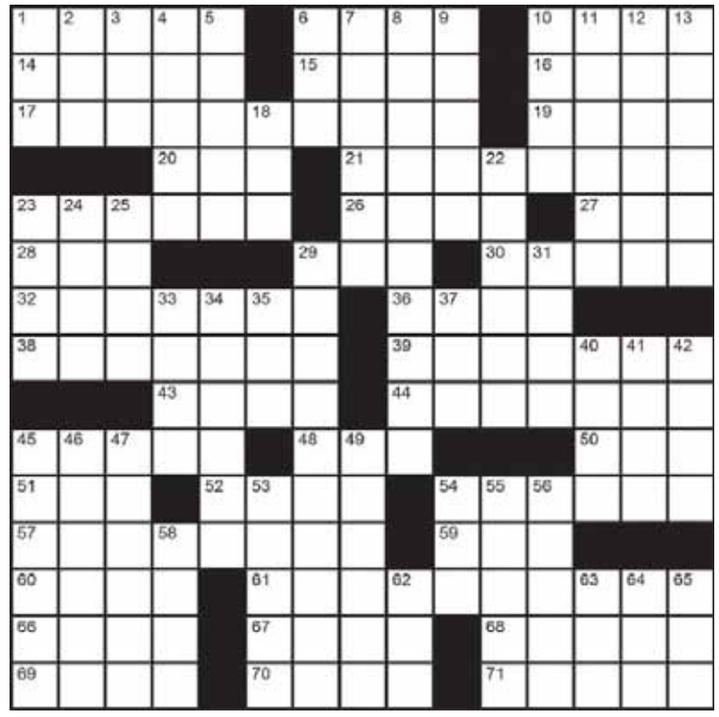
Directions
1. Whisk the barbecue sauce, vinegar, molasses and hot pepper sauce in a bowl. If you have time, marinate the chicken in the sauce for at least 30 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.
2. For the salsa, spray a non-stick skillet with cooking oil. Place over medium heat, and sauté the corn and red pepper until the corn begins to brown, about five minutes. Stir in the beans, onion and cilantro. Set aside.
3. Remove the chicken from the marinade, and set the marinade aside in a small saucepan.
4. Preheat the barbecue or a non-stick grill pan to medium and spray with cooking oil. Cook the chicken over medium-high heat for 10 minutes per side, or until temperature reaches 165 F.
5. While the chicken is cooking, bring the reserved marinade to a boil and boil for five minutes. Serve the chicken with the sauce and salsa on the side.

Nutrition per serving
- Calories 205
- Protein 28 g
- Carbohydrates 16 g
- Total fat 2 g
- Cholesterol 66 mg
- Sodium 270 mg

PHOTO: ROSE REISMAN

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Comp. help givers
6. Falls asleep, with Off
10. Cobbler's tools
14. "The Good in Everyone" band from Halifax
15. Catch
16. Decoy
17. Narrow escape: 2 wds.
19. Being
20. Ink-on-skin pic
21. Material used for making mechanical toys back in the olden days
23. Crossword's friend
26. Un-evens
27. "The Fresh Prince of __-Air"
28. William Tell's canton
29. For
30. Risky/complicated
32. Pasta dish
36. Laboratory bottle
38. Level/squash
39. Towards the middle
43. Partner of Pete and Julie on 1968 to 1973 series "The Mod Squad"
44. Formal surrendering, as of territory
45. Jiggly dessert
48. Informally seat the theatre-goers
50. Air Supply's "Just __ Am"
51. Disney deer
52. Waistcloth
54. Sculpting hammer
57. Like the sound of chalk on the board
59. Lacto-__ vegetarian
60. Plug away
61. Wildlife park attraction near Hamilton, African __ __
66. Wax-coated cheese
67. Ms. Skye of "Say Anything..." (1989)
68. Work the fashion runway
69. Soaks flax
70. Tire: French
71. Uses the keyboard

DOWN
1. QVC equivalent in Canada
2. Building wing
3. Dove's murmur
4. Must: 2 wds.
5. __ preview (Special movie showing)
6. __ degree
7. Speechmaker
8. Lolita __ (London, Ontario born actress of 1998's "Gods and Monsters")
9. Fork out
10. Eden offspring
11. Sushi condiment
12. One putting a home on the market, say
13. __-eyed gaze
18. After-R trio
22. "Fiddlesticks!" and "Poppycock!"
23. Jan & Dean's "__ City"
24. __ Mountains (Range in Russia)
25. Canadian fashion makeover show, "__ on a Dime"
29. __ Cactus (Plant found in southern parts of the Prairies, it looks like an item in a sewing kit)
31. Sigher's word
33. "__ do." (This will suffice)
34. Futile
35. "1-2-3" singer Mr. Barry
37. 'Serpent' tail?
40. Currency in Oman
41. Medicine amount
42. Huffy-puffy mood
45. Royal court entertainer
46. Make the message secret
47. Cowboy's corraler
49. George Harrison, as a Beatle = The __ __
53. At __ (All at once)
54. Rap artist, __ Def
55. Stop, in sailing
56. Elevated
58. Tree types
62. Modern, in Munich
63. Alsatian artist Jean
64. 'Street' in Montreal
65. TGIF part

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You may not change your opinion often but when you do you really do — it's more a transformation than an adjustment — and that will happen today. You will be a totally different, and better, person come morning.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Is it possible to have too much of a good thing? You will get everything you desire today, plus a few things you didn't eveb know you wanted.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
No matter how much you want to help other people, you must help yourself first. What good will you be to others if you are constantly worrying about paying the bills? Financial security must come first.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Today marks an ending of some sort. The good thing about endings is that they make new beginnings possible, so don't get upset if you have to say goodbye to something you cherish.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Aim high and refuse to accept second best. That applies especially to relationships. If you forget everything else over the next 24 hours at least remember the three Ls: Love, laugh and learn.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Travel plans could be disrupted but there is no point getting angry about it. If you find yourself stranded, just look around a bit and admire the scenery.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You may find a colleague unusually obstructive today, but don't cross them off your list yet because the planets suggest it is not their fault. They too are coming under pressure from people further up the hierarchy.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
There is no point trying to run away from your problems. The more constructive part of your nature knows it must face them head on. Life may be tough but you can be tough too.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Someone will come to your rescue and do what has to be done with no questions asked and no thought of reward. You should be grateful to have friends as good as this.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You need to make up your mind and choose between equally appealing alternatives. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you can have it both ways because most likely you will end up with nothing.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You are holding on too tightly and strangling the life out of a situation that needs a lighter touch. You don't have to be master of all you survey. You only have to master yourself.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You will be generous today and others will be generous back. Look past superficial differences and realize that we are all very much the same under the skin.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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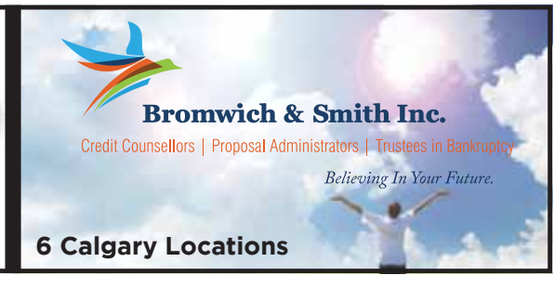
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